

Covid 19 Treatment FAQ

Information for Pharmacies – FAQ:

1. Is this medication listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme?

From 1 March 2022 this medicine will be listed under the PBS s85 (General Schedule) for the treatment of COVID-19 in eligible patients.

2. What is the cost of this medicine to patients?

The Department of Health is listing this medicine as s85 (General Schedule) with the standard patient co-payment under existing arrangements to apply.

3. How can I dispense this medicine if it is not in my Pharmacy Dispensing Software?

Pharmacies are not able to claim via PBS Online until their Pharmacy Dispensing Software (PDS) is updated. Pharmacies will have to dispense the script and hold the claim until PDS is updated. Alternatively, pharmacies may submit manual claims until PDS is updated.

4. Are there separate prescribing/dispensing requirements for aged care residents? Do they use the medications kept at the aged care facilities (non-PBS) or through PBS channel (e.g. community pharmacies)?

Please refer to www.health.gov.au for more information. This medicines will be available through the National Medical Stockpile for residential aged care facilities (RACFs), rural and remote communities (particularly regions with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations) and to state and territory governments for distribution to those at highest risk in the community, including people with disability.

5. Is the item subject to Early Supply/SN20 Day rule?

No.

6. Can I charge any additional dispensing fees or other charges?

Additional fees or charges are not permitted for PBS prescriptions. You can only charge additional fees for non-PBS/private prescriptions.

7. Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please refer to the frequently asked questions on the Department of Health website www.health.gov.au

Information for Prescribers – FAQ:

1. Who is eligible?

Please refer to www.pbs.gov.au for a full list of restrictions for this medicine. In summary, patients with symptomatic, confirmed positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result OR positive rapid antigen test (RAT) result of coronavirus infection and who are:

- within five days of symptom onset in adults with COVID-19 who do not require hospitalisation; and
- over 65 and have two or more risk factors for disease progression; or
- over 50 and identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and have two or more risk factors for disease progression; or
- moderately to severely immunocompromised and at risk of disease progression due to their immunocompromised status.

Full eligibility criteria for the relevant patient cohorts is outlined on www.pbs.gov.au

2. Who is not eligible?

Full eligibility criteria for the relevant patient cohorts is outlined on www.pbs.gov.au. This drug is not PBS subsidised for the pre-exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis for the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

3. Can this medication be prescribed under e-prescription?

Not all prescribing software may have been updated to allow for ePrescribing and prescriptions may be unable to be uploaded to the Prescription Exchange Service. A standard paper based authority prescription may be supplied.

4. Is this medicine authority required?

This medicine will be Authority Required (STREAMLINED) on the s85 General Schedule.

5. My prescribing software hasn't been update and I cannot see the new PBS listed COVID-19 item. How do I prescribe this for my patient?

It is important that you update your prescribing software when appropriate to ensure the COVID-19 treatment item code changes is displayed. If you have updated your prescribing software and the item is still not appearing you can handwrite the prescription and obtain the streamlined code from PBS website.

6. I don't have an authority prescription pad or computer generated prescription. How do I prescribe this item for my patient?

Prescriptions for Authority Required (STREAMLINED) items must be written on a PBS Authority prescription. Authority prescription forms include a valid authority prescription number and a section for the prescriber to record the valid phone or streamlined approval code which is required for PBS dispensing. Please ensure you have adequate supply of PBS Authority prescription forms ahead of the listing date.

7. If my patient is vaccinated can I still prescribe this medication?

Patient eligibility is outlined in the restrictions. Please refer to www.pbs.gov.au for a full list of restrictions for this medicine.

8. Can I prescribe repeats for this medicine?

No increase in quantity and number of repeats are allowed for all COVID treatment items.