



LAC DPH COVID-19 Update:  
Therapeutics for SNFs, and Novavax  
July 27, 2022



*This message is intended for all healthcare providers in Los Angeles County.  
Please distribute as appropriate.*

### Key Messages

- All patients in skilled nursing facilities testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 must be immediately assessed for outpatient COVID-19 treatment including oral antivirals. Oral antivirals continue to be widely underutilized in this high-risk population.
- The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine is recommended as a primary series option for adults.

### Health Officer Order: Outpatient COVID-19 Treatment in Skilled Nursing Facilities

As of July 27, 2022, over half of the 342 skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) in LA County are experiencing active COVID-19 outbreaks, which is the highest level of transmission since the surge last winter. All patients in SNFs are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 if infected. Fortunately, there are now outpatient COVID-19 treatments such as oral antivirals that are easy to administer and can reduce the risk of poor outcomes, including hospitalization and death. Despite the wide availability of oral antivirals, they continue to be underutilized in the nursing home population.

To close this crucial gap and significantly improve outcomes in this vulnerable population, Public Health issued an update on July 25, 2022 to the [Order of the Health Officer for Control of COVID-19: Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission in Skilled Nursing Facilities](#) **requiring all SNF patients with a positive SARS-CoV-2 viral test to be immediately assessed by their healthcare provider for any symptoms of COVID-19. Oral COVID-19 antivirals should be initiated at the facility within 5 days of symptom onset if clinically appropriate, i.e., they have [mild or moderate symptoms](#) and there are no contraindications.** Please do not transfer residents to hospitals solely for treatment of mild or moderate COVID-19. These residents should be treated at their SNF.

In addition to this updated Health Officer Order, Public Health is working on the following to increase use of oral antivirals in nursing homes:

- Ensuring long-term care pharmacies have access to oral antivirals and other outpatient COVID-19 treatments.
- Training SNF staff on a streamlined protocol for accessing oral antivirals.
- Educating SNF staff on outpatient COVID-19 treatment via multiple webinars.

Since the oral antivirals Paxlovid (ritonavir-boosted nirmatrelvir) and molnupiravir must be taken **within 5 days** of symptom onset, all healthcare providers working with SNFs should ask to be notified immediately of any patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, especially when the facility is in an active outbreak. Even asymptomatic infected patients could be considered for an advance oral antiviral prescription should any symptoms develop later. Furthermore, it is highly recommended for providers to work with their SNFs in contacting medical decision makers to discuss oral antiviral treatment in advance of potential outbreaks and/or infections. Wherever

possible, providers should obtain written advance consent to expedite the process and ensure this high-risk patient population can obtain effective treatment in time.

Of note, Paxlovid has significant drug-drug interactions given the ritonavir component and needs to be renally dosed. Thus, providers must carefully review the patients' medication lists while utilizing a drug interaction tool (see resources below), review latest laboratory blood work, and/or work with the facility's pharmacist prior to prescribing.

For more resources on oral COVID-19 antivirals, please see the following:

- LAC DPH COVID-19 Outpatient Therapeutics: [ph.lacounty.gov/covidtherapeutics](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidtherapeutics)
- IDSA COVID-19 Outpatient Treatment Guidelines: <https://www.idsociety.org/covid-19-real-time-learning-network/covid-19-outpatient-treatment--guidelines-roadmap/>
- Liverpool COVID-19 Drug Interactions website: <https://www.covid19-druginteractions.org/>
- PAXLOVID (ritonavir-boosted nirmatrelvir)
  - FDA's Fact sheet for health providers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/155050/download>
  - FDA's PAXLOVID Checklist Tool for Prescribers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/158165/download>
- Lagevrio (molnupiravir):
  - FDA's Fact sheet for health providers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/155054/download>
  - FDA's Molnupiravir Checklist Tool for Prescribers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/155118/download>

## **Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has endorsed its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation that the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine be used as another primary series option for adults ages 18 years and older. This follows the FDA's emergency use authorization of Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, adjuvanted, on 7/13/22.

Novavax is a two-dose primary series that should be administered 3-8 weeks apart. Individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised should receive their 2nd dose 3 weeks after their 1st dose. A 3rd primary series dose is not authorized for immunocompromised individuals who receive two doses of Novavax. Booster doses of Novavax have not been authorized at this time.

Refer to the [CDC Clinical Considerations](#) | [CDC At-A-Glance COVID-19 Vaccine Schedules](#) for more details.

CDC will be hosting a [webinar](#) with free CME entitled "Recommendations for the Novavax COVID-19 Primary Series in Adults Ages 18 and Older" on Thursday, July 28 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM PT.

Note: Supplies of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine are expected to be quite limited. Vaccine is now available for ordering through the myCAvax ordering system for providers that anticipate demand for this product. Given the anticipated limits in vaccine doses that will be available, not all providers are expected to carry the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine.

**Visit the LAC DPH Provider COVID-19 [Hub](#), [Vaccination Hub](#) and [Therapeutics Webpage](#) (refresh your browser to view the latest version).**

This communication was sent by Sharon Balter, MD, Director, Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

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