

## Updates: COVID-19 oral antivirals, COVID-19 vaccines and Naloxone for workplaces

### COVID-19 oral antivirals

#### Paxlovid criteria updated

Pharmacy teams should be aware that the Paxlovid criteria have been updated on the Alberta Health Services (AHS) website, [ahs.ca/covidopt](https://ahs.ca/covidopt). It's important to know that these updated criteria are considered **guidelines** and clinicians can still assess patients on a **case-by-case basis** for appropriateness using their professional judgement.

#### Evusheld and Sotrovimab are no longer recommended

For awareness, Recent evidence suggests Sotrovimab and Evusheld **may not be effective** in treating or—in the case of Evusheld—preventing the dominant COVID-19 variants in Alberta at this time. **Paxlovid and Remdesivir are the only two medications recommended at this time.** In situations where neither of these medications can be prescribed, a physician may consider Sotrovimab or Evusheld on a case-by-case basis.

#### Expiry extension for Paxlovid

Health Canada has recently approved an expiry extension for select lots of Paxlovid from 18 months to 24 months for the standard dose pack (DIN: 02524031) and the moderate renal impairment dose pack (DIN: 02527804). The table below details the lots affected and extended expiry dates.

Dose pack	Lot numbers	Labelled expiry date	Extended expiry date
PAXLOVID (300 mg nirmatrelvir (2 x 150 mg); 100 mg ritonavir)	FT3540	2022-08-31	2023-11-30
	FX7185, FX4437, FX4444, FX8106	2023-01-31	2024-01-31
	GC8177, GC2133, GC2886, GA6769, GA6205, GA6761	2023-02-28	2024-02-28
	GD1181, GD1183, GC5723, GC5720, GA3793, GD4585	2023-03-31	2024-03-31
	GD8407, GC8182, GC8181, GD8410, GD8409, GD4673, GD4670, GD4671, GD4669, GD4677, GC5733, GD4678	2023-04-30	2024-04-30
	GG2189, GG2190, GG2191, GG2187, GG2185	2023-05-31	2024-05-31
	GK4940, GK4941, GK4942	2023-11-30	2024-05-31
	GK4943, GJ2964, GK1234, GJ7300, GJ7303, GL0349, GL6161, GL0350, GL0351, GL0352, GJ2965	2023-12-31	2024-06-30
	GM7360, GM7359, GM7358, GM7357, GR2928	2024-01-31	2024-07-31
PAXLOVID (300 mg nirmatrelvir (2 x 150 mg); 100 mg ritonavir)	GJ4599	2023-03-31	2024-03-31
	GG3564	2023-05-31	2024-05-31
	GP9562, GP9563	2023-11-30	2024-05-31

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## **COVID-19 vaccines**

### **Comirnaty Pediatric (Pfizer) Bivalent BA.4/BA.5 Vaccine (5 to 11 years old)**

Due to low uptake in the initial rollout phase of Comirnaty Pediatric (Pfizer) Bivalent BA.4/BA.5 Vaccine for children 5 to 11 years old, access **will not be expanded** to community pharmacies at this time. Should support from health practitioners outside AHS be required in the future, pharmacies will be selected from the expressions of interest that were submitted. Albertans can book appointments with AHS by calling 811 or online through the Alberta Vaccine Booking System (AVBS) at [bookvaccine.alberta.ca/](https://bookvaccine.alberta.ca/).

### **Booster doses**

Some Albertans who received booster doses in fall of 2022 may now have exceeded 5 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine dose or infection. Currently guidance does **not** recommend additional booster doses for these individuals.

For children aged 5 to 11 years, current recommendations are that they only receive 1 booster following a primacy series. A bivalent booster dose may be offered to children considered at high risk of severe outcomes who have previously received booster doses of the original Comirnaty Pediatric (Pfizer) vaccine.

A primary vaccine series should be completed with the original Comirnaty (Pfizer) vaccine for all Albertans. Current recommendations based on best evidence available state that bivalent vaccines are only to be used for booster doses at this time.

### **Vaccine wastage**

Although demand for COVID-19 vaccines has declined, the priority for providers continues to be to immunize Albertans, even if this means remaining doses will be wasted. Whenever possible, pharmacies are encouraged to group appointments to minimize wastage.

## **Alberta Vaccine Booking System (AVBS) updates**

### **Monovalent Moderna appointments**

As previously communicated, community pharmacies should no longer have access to the monovalent Moderna vaccine; however, some pharmacies are still including this vaccine type as an available vaccine within the AVBS. Unfortunately, Albertans are booking appointments at these pharmacies specifically for this vaccine. Pharmacies are reminded to remove the monovalent Moderna vaccine tag from the AVBS to prevent inappropriate appointment bookings.

For those Albertans inquiring about the monovalent Moderna vaccine, AHS has supply of this vaccine and will continue to administer until the current product expires in April 2023.

A system update to remove the monovalent Moderna vaccine tag from the AVBS was planned at the end of January 2023, but this update will be delayed due to the expiry date extension of AHS's monovalent Moderna supply.

### **AVBS vaccine labels and tags**

As the lists of vaccines and eligible age cohorts in the AVBS has grown, the naming of COVID-19 vaccines in the AVBS scheduler (for pharmacy and AHS clinics to create appointment schedules) has left some confusion as to what ages are eligible for available vaccines.

On the morning of February 8, the AVBS will undergo a system update that will change the naming conventions of COVID-19 vaccines within the scheduler. Pharmacy users will see updated vaccine labels within the 'Appointment Type' dropdown for vaccine-specific schedules and "Available Vaccines" and "Vaccines managed under General Calendar" lists or dropdowns.

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## Some examples are as follows:

- Under the "Vaccines Managed under General Calendar"
  - **Pediatric Pfizer** will change to **Pfizer Monovalent (5-11y)**
  - **Pfizer Bivalent BA4/5** will change to **Pfizer Bivalent BA4/5 (12+)**
- Under "Appointment Type"
  - **COVID\_19\_Pfizer** will change to **Pfz Mono (12+)**
  - **COVID\_19\_Pfi\_BA4/5\_5-11y\_Bivalent** will change to **Pfz BA4/5 (5-11y)**

Pharmacy users are not required to take any action for this update. Pre-existing appointment schedules, availabilities and booked appointments will not be impacted.

## Naloxone for workplaces

To clarify the information provided by **Benefact 1083** on January 31, 2023, regarding the Workplace Naloxone Program rollout, the cost of the below item is **\$30 plus usual and customary wholesale upcharges**.

**Please use the updated item number provided below to place orders from McKesson Canada.**

Item	Description	Unit UPC
145440	NALOXONE KIT ALBERTA W/DRUG RED 0.4MG/ML 1 DR1	680977100059

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)  
403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)  
1-800-361-9632 (toll free)  
FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)  
FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit [ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php](https://ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php)

