


# PAXLOVID

nirmatrelvir and ritonavir

Antiviral, COVID-19

Availability <sup>1</sup>	Brand name	Quick guide
Combination pack contains: two pink tablets of nirmatrelvir 150 mg & one white tablet of ritonavir 100 mg	Paxlovid	
<b>Effect of food</b>	Can be given before or after food. <sup>1</sup> High fat food increases absorption of nirmatrelvir. <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Warnings</b>	There is a potential for significant drug interactions, some other medicines may need to be withheld or adjusted. Contact a pharmacist or a medicines information service for advice.	
<b>Absorption</b>	Give nirmatrelvir and ritonavir tablets at the same time. <sup>1</sup> Absorption of <b>ritonavir</b> was reduced when the combination tablet with lopinavir (Kaletra) was crushed and given to HIV patients. <sup>3,4</sup> Exposure was not reduced when Kaletra was crushed and given by enteral feeding tube to COVID-19 patients. <sup>5</sup>	
<b>Dose changes</b>	In some people with renal impairment the dose of nirmatrelvir, but not ritonavir, may need to be reduced. Contact a pharmacist or a medicines information service for advice.	
<b>Other</b>	Ritonavir may cause numbness or tingling of the mouth and an impaired or altered sense of taste. <sup>1</sup>	

## What to do for people with enteral feeding tubes

**There is no information about the safety or efficacy of Paxlovid when the tablets are crushed or dispersed and given by enteral feeding tube.**

**Option 1** Contact a pharmacist or medicines information service for advice, or contact the prescriber to consider an alternative COVID-19 therapy.

**Option 2** If Paxlovid is the most suitable option:

**Disperse the nirmatrelvir tablet(s)** in 10–20 mL of water in an enteral syringe. The tablets will form a milky, light pink dispersion within a few minutes.<sup>6</sup>

See Method A for instructions.

Check carefully that the tablet is completely dispersed before giving into the tube, small pieces may be hard to see.

There is no information about suitable tube sizes.

**Crush the ritonavir tablet** and mix with water, then draw into an enteral syringe.<sup>7</sup>

See Method B for instructions. Wear a mask and gloves.

Give nirmatrelvir and ritonavir separately, one after the other, flushing the tube in between.

## What to do for people with swallowing difficulties

**There is no information about the safety or efficacy of crushing Paxlovid.**

**Option 1** Contact a pharmacist or medicines information service for advice, or contact the prescriber to consider an alternative COVID-19 therapy.

**Option 2** If Paxlovid is the most suitable option:

Disperse the nirmatrelvir tablet(s) in water. See Method D for instructions.

If the person cannot swallow thin fluids, crush the nirmatrelvir tablet(s) and mix with a spoonful of yoghurt or apple puree.<sup>7</sup> See Method E for instructions.

Crush the ritonavir tablet and mix with water, or a spoonful of yoghurt or apple puree.<sup>7</sup> See Method E for instructions.

### REFERENCES:

1. Product information. Available from [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au). Accessed 14/11/2022.
2. Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir. Australian public assessment report (AusPAR). January 2022. Available from [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au). Accessed 28/01/2022.
3. Prohaska ES, King AR. Administration of antiretroviral medication via enteral tubes. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm* 2012; 69: 2140-6.
4. Best BM, Capparelli EV, Diep H, Rossi SS, Farrell MJ, Williams E, et al. Pharmacokinetics of lopinavir/ritonavir crushed versus whole tablets in children. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr* 2011; 58: 385-91.
5. Mohsenian Naghani S, Jansen MM, Jaspers T, Bastiaans D, Burger D. Crushing lopinavir/ritonavir tablets does not result in lower exposure to lopinavir/ritonavir in adult patients with COVID-19. *Eur J Hosp Pharm* 2021; May 14. Online ahead of print.
6. SHPA drug dispersion database; 2022.
7. Liverpool drug interactions group. Crushing nirmatrelvir and ritonavir tablets. Liverpool, UK: University of Liverpool. 07/11/2022.