

PAXLOVID

nirmatrelvir and ritonavir

Antiviral, COVID-19

Availability ¹	Brand name	Quick guide
Combination pack contains: two pink tablets of nirmatrelvir 150 mg & one white tablet of ritonavir 100 mg	Paxlovid	
Effect of food	Can be given before or after food. ¹ High fat food increases absorption of nirmatrelvir. ²	
Warnings	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.	
Absorption	Give nirmatrelvir and ritonavir tablets at the same time. ¹ Absorption of ritonavir was reduced when the combination tablet with lopinavir (Kaletra) was crushed and given to HIV patients. ^{3,4} Exposure was not reduced when Kaletra was crushed and given by enteral feeding tube to COVID-19 patients. ⁵	
Dose changes	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.	
Other	Ritonavir may cause numbness or tingling of the mouth and an impaired or altered sense of taste. ¹	

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.⁶

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.⁷

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.⁷ See Method E for instructions.

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

REFERENCES:

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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.
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