

Kia ora koutou,

## **COVID-19 Antiviral Medicines – public campaign information for hauora providers**

Te Whatu Ora is working with Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) to promote this important message.

We want to raise awareness of COVID-19 antiviral medicines, with a focus on Māori and other priority populations at risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19. COVID-19 antiviral medicines are free for people eligible under Pharmac's access criteria, which was expanded in September and now includes:

- Māori or Pacific people aged 50 years or older
- everyone aged 65 years and older
- anyone aged 50 years or older with fewer than two COVID-19 vaccinations
- anyone with a severely weakened immune system
- anyone with Down syndrome
- anyone with sickle cell disease
- anyone previously in critical or high dependency hospital care from COVID-19
- anyone with three or more high-risk medical conditions.

To be eligible, a patient must have COVID-19 and be experiencing symptoms, or be a household contact of someone with COVID-19 and be experiencing symptoms. You can find information on the criteria and the list of high-risk medical conditions on the [COVID-19 Health Hub](#).

Antiviral medicines can be prescribed by GPs and nurse practitioners. They are also available from many pharmacies without a prescription, after the pharmacy confirms the person is eligible and the medicines are safe for them to take.

The Te Puni Kōkiri campaign will ask people to speak with their hauora and Māori health provider if they have questions about their eligibility, think they need antivirals, or want to know where they can get free rapid antigen test (RAT) kits.

Not all hauora providers will be able to provide eligibility assessments for patients or prescribe COVID-19 antiviral medicines. Hauora providers who are not able to provide eligibility assessments for patients or prescribe COVID-19 antiviral medicines can direct people to contact their nearest GP or pharmacy, which can do assessments over the phone and provide COVID-19 antiviral medicines if people are eligible. Home delivery can be arranged.

You can find a list of pharmacies that offer antiviral medicines on the [Healthpoint website](#). The website also includes a list of RAT collection sites if you don't provide these and need to find the nearest one for a patient. RATs can also be ordered for free from [RequestRATS.covid19.health.nz](#) or by calling 0800 222478 and choosing option 3.

Thank you for your support for this rollout of COVID-19 antiviral medicines to people in your communities. We will continue to provide updates and resources as this mahi progresses. If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with the COVID-19 Care in the Community team: [COVIDCareintheCommunity@health.govt.nz](mailto:COVIDCareintheCommunity@health.govt.nz).

Ngā mihi maioha,

## Dan Hirst

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