

Access to Paxlovid® in the Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is about to receive a supply of Paxlovid from the New Zealand Government. It is an expensive medicine that is in short supply worldwide, and needs to be used properly to optimise its benefits and minimise its risks.

Paxlovid has been shown to reduce hospitalisation and death from COVID-19 in unvaccinated people if started within 5 days of symptom onset. However, in New Zealand and other countries, it is used more widely than for just unvaccinated people.

In the Cook Islands, like in New Zealand, Paxlovid will be reserved for those people 18 years old or older, who are most at risk of hospitalisation. It must be prescribed by designated Te Marae Ora prescribers and will be dispensed at the Rarotonga Hospital Pharmacy, if it is appropriate to do so. Paxlovid interacts with many other medicines and for each person's safety, it needs to be carefully checked.

Because Paxlovid is being supplied from the New Zealand Government to Te Marae Ora, it will not be available from private pharmacies in the Cook Islands at this stage.

You may be eligible for Paxlovid if:

- You are 18 years old or older
- You have confirmed symptomatic COVID-19, or have symptoms of COVID-19 and are a household contact of a positive case;
- Your symptoms started within the last 5 days;
- You are 50 years old or older and haven't had two doses of COVID-19 vaccination
- Your immune system isn't working properly
- You have other conditions that put you at risk of hospitalisation or due to COVID-19 – the Doctor will assess this.

If you have COVID-19 like symptoms take a COVID-19 test (either at any health clinic or a home test) and seek medical advice by contacting Tupapa Primary Health Care on Tel:20066 in the first instance.

For further enquiries you can contact the Rarotonga Hospital Pharmacy Tel: 22664, Ext 8033 for additional clarification.

Meitaki Maata

TMO