

COVID-19: testing and treatments for transplant patients

April 13, 2022

Dear Transplant Patient,

COVID-19 continues to circulate in British Columbia. Despite taking precautions and being vaccinated, transplant recipients remain vulnerable of becoming infected and are at higher risk of serious complications.

Treatments for COVID-19 are available in BC. Transplant recipients are among the patient groups who have priority access to these treatments, because they are at high risk of serious complications and hospitalization. The medications should be started within five to seven days of experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID infection. You will also need a positive COVID-test in order to be eligible.

If you develop [cold or flu-like symptoms](#), you should get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible (rapid antigen or PCR). Please let testing centre staff know you are a solid organ transplant recipient. If you experience issues accessing a test, contact your transplant care team.

If your test result is negative, it means COVID-19 was not detected. It is still possible that you have COVID-19. If your symptoms persist or worsen, seek retesting and contact your transplant care team.

If you test positive, contact your transplant care team as soon as possible. They will determine if you might benefit from available treatments. If you are eligible, the preferred, most effective and safer drug treatment (Remdesivir) for transplant patients requires three days of intravenous (IV) infusions at a health authority infusion facility. Your transplant care team will work with the health authority where you live to ensure you receive it.

Paxlovid is an oral COVID-19 treatment available in BC; however, it is not recommended for transplant patients because it interacts with transplant medications.

These treatments are a positive development in our fight against COVID-19. Please let your transplant team know if you have any concerns about taking them.

Please remember, the most important lines of defense remain vaccination (three doses, plus a booster), keeping hands clean, wearing masks and physical distancing.

Your transplant care team is always available to answer any questions you might have about the new COVID-19 treatments, vaccines or other COVID concerns.

This document is current as of April 13, 2022. Check the BC Transplant or the BCCDC website for the most current available information and updates on COVID-19.