

Treatment of COVID-19 with antiretroviral medications

Some antiretroviral drugs (e.g., lopinavir/ritonavir) are being used off-label in the acute-care setting in severely ill patients with COVID-19 as well as earlier in the illness or in uninfected patients in attempts to prevent progression or spread of the disease. Evidence so far has not indicated what role, if any, these medications may have.^{1,2}

Use of any of these medications for these purposes outside of a clinical trial or the advice of an infectious disease specialist in an acute-care setting is inappropriate.

Pharmacists must use their professional judgment to question the appropriateness of any prescriptions they receive for these medications that are outside the usual indications. This is important to protect patients from unnecessary adverse effects and to protect the supply of these medications for those patients who rely on them for treatment of medical conditions for which they have been approved.

The COVID-19 situation is evolving, and data collection is ongoing. The evidence regarding the use of antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of COVID-19 will be reviewed as it becomes available and this statement will be updated accordingly.

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References

1. Ford N, Vitoria M, Rangaraj A et al. Systematic Review of the Efficacy and Safety of Antiretroviral Drugs against SARS, MERS or COVID-19: Initial Assessment. *J Int AIDS Soc.* 2020; Apr;23(4):e25489. doi: 10.1002/jia2.25489.
2. Bin Cao, Yeming W, Danning W et al. A Trial of lopinavir-ritonavir in adults hospitalized with severe Covid-19. *NEJM* March 18, 2020 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2001282