

Administration in Cases of Swallowing Difficulties

Charts updated 13 April 2022

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Please check www.covid19-druginteractions.org for updates.

No recommendation to use experimental therapy for COVID-19 is made.

Data for many agents are limited or absent; therefore, risk-benefit assessment for any individual patient rests with prescribers.

COVID-19 Antiviral Therapies (Licensed or Under Clinical Investigation)

Drug	Formulation	Comments
Azithromycin	<i>Various</i>	Product labels make no recommendation for or against opening capsules or crushing tablets. A suspension for oral administration and a solution for IV infusion are available.
Bamlanivimab/ Etesevimab	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Bebtelovimab	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Casirivimab/ Imdevimab	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Favipiravir	<i>Tablets</i>	Tablets can be crushed and mixed with liquid. (<i>Sissoko D, et al. PLoS Med, 2016, 13(3):e1001967.</i>)
Molnupiravir	<i>Capsules</i>	Capsules should be swallowed whole with a sufficient amount of fluid (e.g., a glass of water). The capsules should not be opened, crushed or chewed. (<i>Lagevrio Summary of Product Characteristics, Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd.</i>)
Niclosamide	<i>Various</i>	Oral, intramuscular, inhaled and intranasal formulations are being studied for COVID-19. Niclosamide tablets can be crushed or disintegrated in a little water; some clinical trials allow for the administration of niclosamide by feeding tubes.
Nirmatrelvir + ritonavir	<i>Tablets</i>	Nirmatrelvir and ritonavir tablets should be swallowed whole and not chewed, broken or crushed. (<i>Paxlovid Summary of Product Characteristics, Pfizer Ltd.</i> <i>Paxlovid FDA Emergency Use Authorization, Pfizer Inc.</i>)
Nitazoxanide	<i>Tablets</i>	The US Prescribing Information makes no recommendation for or against crushing tablets.
	<i>Oral solution</i>	Nitazoxanide powder should be reconstituted with water and may be stored for 7 days at room temperature. (<i>Alinia US Prescribing Information, Romark Pharmaceuticals.</i>)
Remdesivir	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Sotrovimab	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Tixagevimab/ Cilgavimab	<i>IV</i>	IV formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.

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COVID-19 Host-directed Therapies (Licensed or Under Clinical Investigation)

Drug	Formulation	Comments
Anakinra	SC	SC administration – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Baricitinib	Tablets	Product labels make no recommendation for or against crushing tablets.
Budesonide	Inhaled	Inhaled formulation – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Canakinumab	SC	SC administration – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Dexamethasone	Tablets	Some manufacturers recommend that tablets should be swallowed whole (e.g., <i>Dexamethasone Summary of Product Characteristics, Consilient Health Ltd</i>). Some tablets can be divided (e.g., <i>Dexamethasone Summary of Product Characteristics, Advanz Pharma</i>), though tablet pieces may not be stable and should be discarded if not taken immediately (e.g., <i>Neofordex Summary of Product Characteristics, Aspire Pharma Ltd</i>).
	Other	Soluble tablets, oral solutions, and solutions for injection or infusion are available for patients with swallowing difficulties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some tablets may disperse in water; the dispersion settles quite quickly but flushes down an 8Fr NG tube without blocking (<i>Handbook of Drug Administration via Enteral Feeding Tubes, 2015</i>). Oral solutions contain propylene glycol and some manufacturers recommend administration with silicone, PVC or polyurethane NG or PEG tubes only (e.g., <i>Dexamethasone Summary of Product Characteristics, Rosemont Pharmaceuticals Ltd</i>). Dexamethasone has reported incompatibilities and it is not recommended to mix remdesivir and dexamethasone together in the same IV infusion bag if coadministration is required. Dexamethasone sodium phosphate is physically incompatible with daunorubicin, doxorubicin and vancomycin and should not be mixed with solutions containing these drugs. It is also incompatible with doxapram HCl, glycopyrrolate, midazolam, prochlorperazine and promethazine in syringe (<i>Murney P. Aust Prescr, 2008, 31:98-101</i>).
Fluvoxamine	Tablets	Fluvoxamine tablets can be divided into equal halves and should be swallowed with water and without chewing.
Hydrocortisone	Tablets	Formulations for injection or infusion are available for patients with swallowing difficulties.
Infliximab	IV or SC	IV or SC administration – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Methylprednisolone	Tablets	Formulations for injection or infusion are available for patients with swallowing difficulties.
Ruxolitinib	Tablets	The US Prescribing Information states that for patients unable to ingest tablets, ruxolitinib can be administered through a nasogastric tube (8 French or greater) as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspend one tablet in ~40 mL of water with stirring for approximately 10 minutes. Within 6 hours after the tablet has dispersed, the suspension can be administered through a nasogastric tube using an appropriate syringe. The tube should be rinsed with ~75 mL of water. The effect of tube feeding preparations on ruxolitinib exposure during administration through a nasogastric tube has not been evaluated. (<i>Jakafi Prescribing Information, Incyte Corporation</i> .)
Sarilumab	SC	SC administration – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.
Tocilizumab	IV or SC	IV or SC administration – recommendations for swallowing difficulties are not applicable.