COVID-19 summer checklist:
How Kiwis can embrace their holiday season – survey

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, 22 November 2022 – New research released by Pfizer today reveals that only 14% of New Zealanders feel that their life is back to normal following the COVID-19 pandemic. With the nation planning its summer in the midst of rising case numbers, Kiwis are being encouraged to have a COVID-19 summer checklist so they can enjoy their anticipated holiday season with family and friends.

Pfizer New Zealand Medical Director, Krishan Thiru, said that with COVID-19 cases once again rising, it is important to plan ahead as we enter our third summer, and third holiday season, living with the virus.

“We want to ensure Kiwis enjoy a well-deserved break this summer. While making holiday plans, taking a few simple steps can help reduce COVID-19 spread and the risk of serious illness and hospitalisation, and helps maximise quality time with friends and family.”

Thiru recommends Kiwis have a checklist to protect themselves, their whānau and friends in the coming weeks, in addition to the usual public health measures:

- Stay up to date with vaccinations and boosters.
- Pack Rapid Antigen Tests if you’re going away.
- Have a four-step plan if you test positive:
    1. Speak to your pharmacist or GP to check if you are eligible for antiviral treatments.
    2. Learn about antiviral treatments available at treatpositive.co.nz
    3. Find participating pharmacies nearest to you or your destination at healthpoint.co.nz
    4. Phone your doctor or local pharmacy straight away if you test positive for COVID-19.

The study was undertaken by New Zealand research firm Talbot Mills, and sponsored by Pfizer, with more than 1,300 Kiwis to help understand the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

The research shows New Zealanders are still afraid of contracting COVID-19, with more than half (59%) of respondents saying they are fearful of catching the virus, and nearly a third (30%) reporting they are still constraining their activities. However, this does not need to be the case.

The availability of antiviral treatments, such as Pfizer’s PAXLOVID® (nirmatrelvir tablets and ritonavir tablets) does seem to help allay fears. More than half (52%) of respondents stated they are “very” or “quite a lot” fearful of catching the virus, indicating that having access to treatments like PAXLOVID would make them feel more inclined to live their life like they did pre-COVID.

PAXLOVID is fully funded and now widely available for eligible New Zealanders at more than 400 pharmacy locations nationwide, with free delivery offered to patients’ homes if required.

“Vaccination remains the first line of defence against the virus. However, with one million New Zealanders being eligible to treat their COVID-19 infection with antiviral medication, we encourage Kiwis to find out if they are eligible for treatments and how to access them as a second line of defence before they need them,” Thiru said.

Eligibility will depend on several factors, including age, ethnicity, other health conditions and vaccination status, so speak to your pharmacist or GP to check if PAXLOVID is right for you.

For more details, check out Pharmac’s access criteria here and visit: http://www.treatpositive.co.nz. To check the nearest pharmacy that stocks Paxlovid visit: healthpoint.co.nz.

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Notes for the Editor:

Pharmac's access criteria for COVID-19 antivirals is available at: COVID-19 antivirals: Access Criteria - Pharmac | New Zealand Government

At a COVID-19 briefing in September, the New Zealand Government announced it had secured 100,000 treatment courses of PAXLOVID in 2022, making it available to around one million Kiwis. This follows the initial supply agreement signed in December 2021, and Medsafe's provisional consent for the supply and use of PAXLOVID in New Zealand in March 2022.

*About Antivirals

A COVID-19 antiviral treatment is a medicine that works by slowing or stopping the virus from replicating. This may help reduce symptoms and the risk of significant health complications.

About the Research

Pfizer engaged with Talbot Mills to undertake research into the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the everday lives of New Zealanders. The research was conducted through Talbot Mills Research online daily tracking survey.

The survey comprised of a sample that was nationally representative of 1,333 members of the general public aged 18 years and over. The maximum margin of error (at 95% confidence) for a random sample of n=1333 is +/- 2.7.

About PAXLOVID® (nirmatrelvir tablets and ritonavir tablets)
PAXLOVID is a SARS-CoV-2 main protease (Mpro) inhibitor (also known as SARS-CoV-2 3CL protease inhibitor) therapy. It was developed to be administered orally so that it can be prescribed early after infection, potentially helping patients avoid severe illness (which can lead to hospitalisation and death). Nirmatrelvir [PF-07321332], which originated in Pfizer laboratories, is designed to block the activity of the Mpro, an enzyme that the coronavirus needs to replicate. Co-administration with a low dose of ritonavir helps slow the metabolism, or breakdown, of nirmatrelvir in order for it to remain active in the body for longer periods of time at higher concentrations to help combat the virus.

Nirmatrelvir is designed to inhibit viral replication at a stage known as proteolysis, which occurs before viral RNA replication. In preclinical studies, nirmatrelvir did not demonstrate evidence of mutagenic DNA interactions.

Current variants of concern can be resistant to treatments that work by binding to the spike protein found on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. PAXLOVID, however, works intracellularly by binding to the highly conserved Mpro (3CL protease) of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to inhibit viral replication. Nirmatrelvir has shown consistent in vitro antiviral activity against the following variants: Alpha, Beta, Delta, Gamma, Lambda, Mu, and Omicron BA.1,BA.2 and BA.4.

PAXLOVID is generally administered at a dose of 300 mg (two 150 mg tablets) of nirmatrelvir with one 100 mg tablet of ritonavir, given twice-daily for five days. One carton contains five blister packs of PAXLOVID, as co-packaged nirmatrelvir tablets with ritonavir tablets, providing all required doses for a full five-day treatment course.

PAXLOVID® is a registered trademark.

About Pfizer: Breakthroughs That Change Patients' Lives™
At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products, including innovative medicines and vaccines. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as one of the world's premier innovative biopharmaceutical companies, we collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 170 years, we have worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. For more information, please visit: www.pfizer.co.nz

Disclosure Notice
The information contained in this release is as of 12 October 2022. Pfizer assumes no obligation to update forward-looking statements contained in this release as the result of new information or future events or developments.

This statement contains forward-looking information about Pfizer's efforts to combat COVID-19 and PAXLOVID (including a Phase 2/3 study in paediatric patients, a potential age-appropriate formulation for three additional planned cohorts of younger than 6 years old, qualitative assessments of available data, potential benefits, expectations for clinical trials, advance purchase agreements and an agreement with MPP, efforts toward equitable access, the anticipated timing of data readouts, regulatory submissions, regulatory approvals or authorisations, potential to maintain antiviral activity against current variants of concern, planned investment and anticipated manufacturing, distribution and supply), involving substantial risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such statements. Risks and uncertainties include, among other things, the uncertainties inherent in research and development, including the ability to meet anticipated clinical endpoints, commencement and/or completion dates for clinical trials, regulatory submission dates, regulatory approval dates and/or launch dates, as well as risks associated with preclinical and clinical data, including the possibility of unfavourable new preclinical, clinical or safety data and further analyses of existing preclinical, clinical or safety data, the ability to produce comparable clinical or other results including efficacy, safety and tolerability profile observed to date, in additional studies or in larger, more diverse populations following commercialisation; the ability of PAXLOVID to maintain efficacy against emerging virus variants; the risk that serious and unexpected adverse events may occur that have not been previously reported with PAXLOVID use; the risk that preclinical and clinical trial data are subject to differing interpretations and assessments, including during the peer review/publication process, in the scientific community generally, and by regulatory authorities; whether regulatory authorities will be satisfied with the design of and results from these and any future preclinical and clinical studies; whether and when any drug applications or submissions to request emergency use or conditional marketing authorisation for any potential indications for PAXLOVID may be filed in particular jurisdictions and if obtained, whether or when such emergency use authorisation or licenses will expire or terminate; whether and when regulatory authorities in any jurisdictions may approve any applications or submissions for PAXLOVID that may be pending or filed (including a potential new drug application submission in the U.S. and submissions in other jurisdictions), which will depend on myriad factors, including making a determination as to whether the product's benefits outweigh its known risks and determination of the product's efficacy and, if approved, whether it will be commercially successful; decisions by regulatory authorities impacting labelling or marketing, manufacturing processes, safety and/or other matters that could affect the availability or commercial potential of PAXLOVID, including development of products or therapies by other companies; risks related to the availability of raw materials for PAXLOVID; the risk that we may not be able to create or scale up manufacturing capacity on a timely basis or maintain access to logistics or supply channels commensurate with global demand, which would negatively impact our ability to supply the estimated numbers of courses of PAXLOVID within the projected time periods; whether and when additional purchase agreements will be reached; the risk that demand for any products may be reduced or no longer exist; uncertainties regarding the impact of COVID-19 on Pfizer's business, operations and financial results; and competitive developments.

A further description of risks and uncertainties can be found in Pfizer's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021 and in its subsequent reports on Form 10-Q, including in the sections thereof captioned "Risk Factors" and "Forward-Looking Information and Factors That May Affect Future Results", as well as in its subsequent reports on Form 8-K, all of which are filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and available at www.sec.gov and www.pfizer.com.

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