

RECOVERY

Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy

Intervention

Two doses of baloxavir marboxil 40mg (or 80mg if weight ≥ 80 kg) by mouth or nasogastric tube to be given on day 1 and day 4, with the course completed at home if discharged.

Summary of information on baloxavir in influenza

Baloxavir is an influenza specific antiviral that inhibits the viral cap dependent endonuclease enzyme, which is essential for genome replication.¹ It is licensed to treat uncomplicated influenza in people aged ≥ 12 years, and in this group it has a similar effect to neuraminidase inhibitors (NAIs), shortening the duration of symptoms by around one day. Baloxavir appears to reduce viral load more quickly than NAIs, but resistance mutations are more likely to develop during therapy.^{2,3}

Like NAIs, baloxavir has not been shown to be effective in patients hospitalised with influenza. A randomised trial of baloxavir in 322 hospitalised patients did not find a significant reduction in time to clinical improvement, but it also did not rule out a substantial benefit.⁴ A larger study is need to determine whether baloxavir has modest but clinically relevant benefits in hospitalised patients.

Eligibility

- Hospitalised with viral pneumonia syndrome (e.g. fever, cough and/or shortness of breath with compatible chest X-ray changes)
- Confirmed influenza infection (laboratory test or point-of-care test if performed by a healthcare worker)
- Age ≥ 18 and weight ≥ 40 kg

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are not eligible in the EU

Contraindications

- Recent or planned use of baloxavir for the current illness
- Hypersensitivity to baloxavir or the drug product excipients

Significant drug interactions

None known

Potential harm

Occasional hypersensitivity reactions have been reported but there are no other established side effects.

Frequently asked questions

1. *Can baloxavir be given along with a neuraminidase inhibitor, such as oseltamivir?*

Yes, there is no contraindication to giving these drugs together, and given their different mechanisms of action they may have additive effects.

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2. Can baloxavir be given to patients with liver or renal failure?

Yes

3. Does baloxavir need dose adjustment with renal impairment?

No

4. Can parenteral routes be used?

No

References

1. Xofluzza Summary of Product Characteristics (<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/12879>)
2. Hayden FG, Sugaya N, Hirotsu N, et al. Baloxavir Marboxil Investigators Group. Baloxavir Marboxil for Uncomplicated Influenza in Adults and Adolescents. *N Engl J Med*. 2018 Sep 6;379(10):913-923. [PMID: 30184455](#).
3. Ison MG, Portsmouth S, Yoshida Y, et al. Early treatment with baloxavir marboxil in high-risk adolescent and adult outpatients with uncomplicated influenza (CAPSTONE-2): a randomised, placebo-controlled, phase 3 trial. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2020 Oct;20(10):1204-1214. [PMID: 32526195](#).
4. Kumar D, Ison MG, Mira JP, et al. Combining baloxavir marboxil with standard-of-care neuraminidase inhibitor in patients hospitalised with severe influenza (FLAGSTONE): a randomised, parallel-group, double-blind, placebo-controlled, superiority trial. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2022 May;22(5):718-730. [PMID: 35085510](#).