

New Drug for Treating Influenza: Xofluza[®]

In 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new drug for the treatment of influenza. Xofluza[®] (baloxavir marboxil) is indicated for the treatment of acute, uncomplicated influenza, also known as the flu, in individuals 12 years of age and older. It is taken orally as a single-dose and represents the first novel flu therapy approved in almost 20 years.

A Novel Drug

This first-in-class agent has a unique mechanism of action and works to prevent the influenza virus from replicating by blocking an enzyme required for the virus to spread. It has efficacy against a number of influenza viruses and has been shown to shorten the duration of influenza when taken within 48 hours of symptoms starting.

In clinical studies, patients treated with baloxavir had a significantly shorter course of flu illness than those who received placebo with the duration of flu symptoms being decreased by at least 1 day. Baloxavir also demonstrated a similar reduction in the duration of flu symptoms as oseltamivir. The most common side effects were diarrhea, bronchitis, nausea and sinusitis.

The dose of Xofluza is either 40 mg or 80 mg, depending on the patient's body weight, with an average wholesale price (AWP) of \$180.00 per dose. For additional details on the new flu therapy, view the manufacturer's [press release](#).

Influenza Season

Influenza is a common and contagious illness caused by respiratory viruses. Other FDA-approved antiviral therapies used for decreasing flu symptoms and the duration of illness include:

Brand Name	Dosing*	AWP per Treatment Course
Rapivab[®] (peramivir)	600 mg intravenous (IV) once	\$1,140.00
Relenza[®] (zanamivir)	Two inhalations (10 mg) twice daily for 5 days	\$70.80
Tamiflu[®] (oseltamivir)**	75 mg orally twice daily for 5 days	\$182.26

**Dosages for treatment of seasonal influenza (strains A or B). Therapy should be initiated within 48 hours of symptom onset. **Also available as a generic.*

Although these drugs are approved to treat the flu, the CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for all persons 6 months of age and older, unless contraindications exist. Annual vaccination remains the primary way to prevent and control the spread of influenza. Additional recommendations on the annual flu vaccine are available [here](#).

References

1. FDA approves new drug to treat influenza. FDA News Release. <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm624226.htm>. Updated October 24, 2018. Accessed October 24, 2018.
2. Roche Media Release. Roche announces FDA approval of Xofluza (baloxavir marboxil) for influenza. <https://www.roche.com/media/releases/med-cor-2018-10-24.htm>. Updated October 24, 2018. Accessed October 24, 2018.
3. Brooks M. FDA Oks Xofluza, First New Flu Antiviral in Nearly 20 Years. Medscape Medical News. <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/903911>. Updated October 24, 2018. Accessed October 24, 2018.
4. Influenza (Flu) Antiviral Drugs and Related Information. U.S. FDA. <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/InformationbyDrugClass/ucm100228.htm#ApprovedDrugs>. Updated September 11, 2018. Accessed October 24, 2018.
5. Influenza ACIP Vaccine Recommendations. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/flu.html>. Updated September 5, 2018. Accessed September 24, 2018.

