

Singapore approves anti-viral drug for COVID-19 patients

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Singapore has approved the use of the anti-viral drug remdesivir to treat seriously ill coronavirus patients, authorities said Wednesday, becoming the latest country to do so.

The US authorised the emergency use of remdesivir in hospitals at the start of May, followed by Japan and South Korea, while Europe has been considering following suit.

It has been granted conditional approval in Singapore for treatment of some adult virus patients, such as those who require intensive breathing support, the country's health products regulator said.

The regulator, the Health Sciences Authority, said it had "expedited the review of remdesivir given the urgent public health need during the COVID-19 pandemic".

As a condition for the approval, the authority requires US-based Gilead Sciences, which developed the drug, to collect safety data and monitor its use.

Singapore initially kept the virus in check with a strict regime of testing and contact tracing, only for serious outbreaks to emerge later in dormitories housing low-paid foreign workers.

The city-state now has the highest recorded number of infections in Southeast Asia with nearly 39,000 cases, mostly among [foreign workers](#). The [death toll](#) stands at 25.

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