

Canada OKs remdesivir for use against coronavirus

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Canada on Tuesday gave the green light for people with severe symptoms of COVID-19 to be treated with the anti-viral drug remdesivir.

"Remdesivir is the first drug that Health Canada has authorized for the treatment of COVID-19," said the health ministry.

At least two major US studies have shown that remdesivir can reduce the duration of hospital stays for COVID-19 patients.

Washington authorized the emergency use of the medicine—which was originally intended as a treatment for Ebola—on May 1, followed by several Asian nations including Japan and South Korea.

Canada said Tuesday it can be used on COVID-19 patients who have pneumonia and need extra oxygen to help them breathe.

The doses used in Canada will be made by a unit of Gilead Sciences, the US pharmaceutical company that developed the drug.

In early July, the European Commission also authorized use of remdesivir to treat the coronavirus.

As of Tuesday, Canada was reporting 114,800 cases of the virus and more than 8,900 fatalities.

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