



July 2024

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program Update

The latest news on NIHB policies and benefit coverage for First Nations and Inuit clients

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Pharmacy benefit information

NIHB Drug benefit list

- The NIHB Drug benefit list provides up-to-date information on medications and health products that are eligible for coverage under NIHB’s pharmacy benefit
- Clients, pharmacists and prescribers can search for specific medications and products by using the online [Drug benefit list](https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212) (nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212), located on the Express Scripts Canada NIHB website
 - for best results, search medications by ‘chemical name’ (such as ibuprofen, not Advil), then ‘view details’ to see the listing status and criteria for each product
- The complete [Drug benefit list](#) is also available as a PDF file, now located on the Express Scripts Canada NIHB website
 - click ‘Download Drug Benefit List’ to access the PDF
- The NIHB Drug benefit list is updated regularly as new medications and products are added for coverage



New pharmacy benefit listings

Check the [Drug benefit list](https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212) (nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/040212) to find all eligible products and criteria for coverage.

The following medications and products are now covered as open benefits without prior approval:

- **Bijuva (estradiol-progesterone)** 1/100mg capsule for the treatment of moderate to severe 'hot flashes' due to menopause
- **Nypozi (filgrastim)** for the treatment of certain cancers, patients with Severe Chronic Neutropenia (SCN) or patients with HIV infection
- **Mezera (mesalazine)** tablets for treatment of mild to moderate ulcerative colitis
- **Ketorolac** tablets for short-term treatment of moderate to severe pain following surgery

The following new listings are covered as limited use benefits with prior approval:

- **Saphnelo (anifrolumab)** for treatment of lupus in adults
- **Ultomiris (ravulizumab)** for treatment of paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria and atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome, which are rare blood disorders
- **Qulipta (atogepant)** for prevention of chronic migraine in adults
- **Zeposia (ozanimod)** for treatment of moderate to severe ulcerative colitis
- **Kerendia (finerenone)**, used along with other treatments to reduce the risk of serious complications in adults with chronic kidney disease and type 2 diabetes

Discontinuation of sole prescriber restrictions under the Client Safety Program

- As of July 2, 2024, NIHB no longer restricts clients to a sole prescriber for opioids, benzodiazepines, stimulants, gabapentin, pregabalin, and/or nabilone, under the Client Safety Program
- This measure was initially introduced by NIHB in 2007 to reduce risks that can occur if prescriptions for these medications are obtained from multiple doctors. It applied to clients being treated for opioid use disorder or based on patterns of prescription drug use
- However if clients have difficulty finding a sole prescriber, this presents a barrier to access when these medications are required
- Provinces and territories now have enhanced prescription monitoring programs or electronic medical records, so doctors and pharmacists can see prescribing patterns that show a risk to client safety
- NIHB continues to have other client safety measures in place to promote safe and effective use of prescription medications
- Dose limits still apply for NIHB coverage of these above medications, and a maximum of 30 days' supply can be dispensed at one time



Emergency supply policy for clients receiving end-of-life care or cancer treatment

- The End-of-Life Formulary provides special coverage for clients diagnosed with a terminal illness who are near the end of life. The Adjunct Cancer Formulary addresses the needs of clients undergoing cancer treatments
- For clients with access to these special formularies, NIHB's emergency supply policy now allows pharmacists to dispense up to 14 days supply of these medications, while waiting for prior approval forms to be returned
- Clients at the end of life or undergoing cancer treatments are also exempt from NIHB opioid dose limits, when requested by pharmacy providers

Dental benefit information

Changes to predetermination, frequency guidelines and coverage for some dental services

NIHB has made the following changes to dental benefit coverage. Consult the [Dental benefits guide](#) (available at www.canada.ca/nihb-dental) for more information:

- The first dental visit/orientation for children 3 years of age and under no longer requires predetermination
- Coverage for pulpotomy/pulpectomy on primary (baby) teeth now includes primary incisors for clients under the age of 5
- Prefabricated metal crowns for permanent teeth no longer require predetermination
- Emergency exams are no longer subject to a frequency guideline, and no longer count against the maximum number of eligible annual exams
- Coverage for topical application of an antimicrobial or remineralization agent, including silver diamine fluoride, to lesions on the teeth has increased to 2 treatments in 12 months for clients 17 years of age and over
- Focal plane tomograms, a type of x-ray, are now eligible for coverage

Medical supplies and equipment benefits

Modifications to Footwear

- Foot care professionals can modify your footwear to help address a range of foot conditions and symptoms
- NIHB now covers one modification per footwear item per year (left, right or both), when the service has been prescribed by a doctor, nurse or podiatrist
- All necessary alterations performed at a single time are considered as one modification
- For more information, see section [4.0 Footwear](#) of the MS&E Guide and Benefits Lists (available at www.canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment)



NIHB client inquiries

Email for general inquiries only. Do not send client reimbursement requests or appeals by email.

Email	nihb-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca
Alberta	<p>General inquiries: 1-800-232-7301 Email: abnihbqa-qrssna@sac-isc.gc.ca</p> <p>Medical Transportation: 1-800-514-7106 Email: sac.eru-ure.isc@canada.ca</p>
Atlantic	<p>1-800-565-3294 Email: nihb-atlfnihb@sac-isc.gc.ca</p>
British Columbia	
NIHB clients (Inuit and non-resident First Nations)	1-800-232-7301
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) (First Nations BC residents)	1-855-550-5454
Manitoba	<p>General inquiries: 1-800-665-8507 Medical Transportation: 1-877-983-0911</p>
Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon	1-888-332-9222
Ontario	1-800-640-0642
Quebec	<p>1-514-283-1575 1-877-483-1575</p>
Saskatchewan	<p>1-866-885-3933 Email: sac.sasknihb_inquiries.isc@canada.ca</p>
NIHB Drug Exception Centre (Pharmacy benefits)	1-800-580-0950
NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre (Dental and orthodontic services)	<p>1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services) 1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)</p>
NIHB Call Centre at Express Scripts Canada	1-888-441-4777

For assistance with services provided by Express Scripts Canada, including NIHB client web accounts and submission of client reimbursement requests for pharmacy, dental, MS&E, vision care and mental health counselling benefits.