



January 2021

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

New coverage for Shingrix

- As of January 11, 2021, the Shingrix vaccine is covered by NIHB as a limited use benefit.
- Shingrix is a vaccine to prevent shingles, which causes a painful rash and can be severe in some people.
- Shingles is caused by the re-activation of the virus that causes chickenpox. The risk of shingles is higher in seniors and in people with weaker immune systems.
- The vaccine is given in two doses, 2 to 6 months apart.
- Prior approval is not required for clients between 65 and 70 years of age.
- Shingrix is also included on the Formulary for Adjunct Medications Used During Active Cancer Treatment.
- Clients that have received approval for any medication on this formulary will be automatically approved for Shingrix.

- For clients who have other serious health conditions that weaken their immune system, NIHB will consider coverage on an exception basis.
- If your doctor prescribes the Shingrix vaccine for you, you'll need to get it from the pharmacy. Pharmacists should call the NIHB DEC to request prior approval (if required).
- In most provinces and territories, the Shingrix vaccine can often be administered in pharmacies and pharmacists can bill NIHB for an injection fee. Contact your pharmacy first to confirm that they have it in stock and if they can administer the injection.
- If you are unable to have the vaccine administered at a pharmacy, ask your health care provider about other options.
- To maximize the protection offered by Shingrix, it is important that you get both doses. When you get your first dose, ask your doctor or pharmacist to schedule your next dose.

Other new pharmacy benefit listings

- Mezera 1 gram rectal foam (mesalazine) is available as an open benefit (prior approval not required). This medication is used for treatment of inflammatory bowel disease.
- Ziextenzo (pegfilgrastim) 10mg/mL injection is listed as an open benefit. This medication is used to prevent infection in clients receiving certain types of cancer treatment.
- Fast-acting dextrose products, Dex-4 Glucose Liquiblast and Dex-4 Glucose Gel are now available as open benefits, in addition to BD Glucose and DEX-4 Glucose tablets. These products are used to quickly raise blood sugar levels for diabetic clients.
- Prevymis (letermovir) vials and tablets are limited use benefits (prior approval required) for the prevention of cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection in adult clients who have received bone marrow transplants.
- Riximyo (rituximab) 10 mg/mL injection is a limited use benefit for treatment of severe rheumatoid arthritis.

Reminder: non-prescription products recommended by pharmacists

- Under the NIHB pharmacy prescriber policy, pharmacists and other health professionals can recommend non-prescription drugs and health products that are eligible for coverage as NIHB pharmacy benefits and listed on the NIHB drug benefit list.
- Previously, NIHB had a list of selected list of non-prescription items that could be recommended by a pharmacist. That list is no longer in effect, and is replaced by this new policy.
- This means you don't need a prescription from a doctor for coverage of non-prescription items on the NIHB drug benefit list.
- Here are just a few examples of products that can be recommended by pharmacists for NIHB coverage:
 - smoking cessation products

- vitamins
- non-medicated emollient creams (Glaxal Base and similar products) for the treatment of eczema (prior approval required)
- Check the NIHB drug benefit list at nihb.express-scripts.ca to find eligible pharmacy benefits covered by NIHB, as well as any criteria for coverage.

Medical supplies and equipment (MS&E) information

Augmentative and alternative communication benefits

- Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) benefits are now listed as MS&E benefits.
- These devices and supplies are used to supplement or replace natural speech when clients have a significant speech impairment.
- AAC benefits covered by NIHB include:
 - Quick messaging devices
 - Speech-generating devices (SGD)
 - Communication display boards and software
 - Integrated and complex systems
 - Software
 - Switches and mounting systems
 - Accessories
- Find more information in the [communication benefits list](http://canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment) (available at canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment).

Non-implantable bone conduction hearing systems

- Non-implantable bone conduction hearing systems are now a limited use benefit.
- These products may be used by clients with conductive hearing loss that isn't helped by regular hearing aids.
- Find more information in the [audiology benefits list](http://canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment) (available at canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment).

Reimbursement for gloves

- NIHB covers latex and vinyl gloves as open benefits, up to 12 boxes per year.
- Providers can bill NIHB, or NIHB will reimburse clients up to \$13.75 for one box of 100 gloves in all provinces, and \$15.80 in the Territories.
- Gloves are covered with a prescription from a physician or a nurse practitioner, or a written recommendation from a registered nurse.

- Find more information in the [medical surgical supplies and equipment benefit list](https://www.canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment) (available at [canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment](https://www.canada.ca/nihb-medical-supplies-equipment)).

Vision care benefit information

Temporary coverage of shipping during COVID-19

- As a temporary measure, vision care providers can bill NIHB for the cost of shipping eligible eyewear to clients who are unable or prefer not to visit the retail location.
- Let your eyewear provider know if you'd like the item shipped to you so they can include the shipping cost in the prior approval request to NIHB.

General program information

NIHB clients in British Columbia

- In BC, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) provides health benefit coverage for First Nations people who are BC residents (<https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/eligibility>).
- The NIHB Program continues to provide coverage and services for Inuit in BC, as well as First Nations who are not BC residents.
- If you are an NIHB client in BC and need help finding a benefit provider, please call NIHB at 1-800-232-7301 for assistance.
- Many providers in BC are enrolled with NIHB to provide benefits and bill the program directly, however they may not see many NIHB clients.
- NIHB recommends that you contact the provider's office before you visit to let them know that you are an NIHB (not FNHA) client, and confirm that they can bill NIHB directly for eligible products and services provided to you.

NIHB client inquiries

Email	sac.nihb-ssna.isc@canada.ca
Alberta	1-800-232-7301 Medical Transportation: 1-800-514-7106
Atlantic	1-800-565-3294 Email: sac.nihb-atlfnihb.isc@canada.ca
British Columbia	
NIHB clients (Inuit and non-resident First Nations)	1-800-232-7301

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) <i>(First Nations BC residents)</i>	1-855-550-5454
Manitoba	1-800-665-8507 Medical Transportation: 1-877-983-0911
Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon	1-888-332-9222
Ontario	1-800-640-0642
Quebec	1-514-283-1575 1-877-483-1575 Mental Health Counselling: 1-877-583-2965
Saskatchewan	1-866-885-3933 Email: sac.sasknihb_inquiries.isc@canada.ca

Pharmacy benefits

NIHB Drug Exception Centre 1-800-580-0950

Dental and orthodontic services

NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre 1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services)
1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)

Express Scripts Canada

NIHB Client Call Centre 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.