



PharmaCare and Epilepsy

PharmaCare helps British Columbians pay the cost of many prescription medications and certain medical supplies.

Who is covered?

Most British Columbians are covered under the income-based Fair PharmaCare plan. Over 1.3 million families are currently registered for this plan.

Fair PharmaCare provides the most assistance to British Columbians with lower incomes, but also protects families at any income level from catastrophic medication costs. The plan does this by setting a maximum amount a family needs to pay each year before the government helps them with additional costs.

You must register for Fair PharmaCare to receive full coverage. If you are not registered, the plan cannot pay any of your costs until you have spent \$10,000 yearly.

There is no cost to register.

To obtain income-based Fair PharmaCare coverage, you must have:

- Valid, active Medical Services Plan of British Columbia (MSP) coverage; and,
- Filed an income tax return two years ago. Note: If you could not file taxes in Canada two years ago, you may be able to provide PharmaCare with other proof of your income.

Register for Fair PharmaCare

Register on the PharmaCare website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare or call Health Insurance BC, which administers both the B.C. Medical Services Plan and PharmaCare on behalf of the provincial government:

- From Vancouver, call 604-683-7151
- From the rest of B.C., call toll-free 1-800-663-7100

You can register for Fair PharmaCare 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you use [online registration](#). Health Insurance BC Customer Service Representatives can register you by phone Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Other PharmaCare Plans

PharmaCare also has plans that serve specific groups including:

- People living in residential care facilities;
- People receiving B.C. Income Assistance;
- Children in the Ministry of Children and Family Development's At Home Program;
- People with lower income who need help in paying for psychiatric medications; and,
- People receiving palliative care in a home or home-like setting.



How much is covered?

If you are covered under Fair PharmaCare, you pay all your prescription costs until you reach a level known as your deductible. PharmaCare then begins to pay a portion of your eligible medication costs for the rest of the year.

PharmaCare pays 70% of your eligible medication costs for the year, once you reach your deductible.

There is also a family maximum. Once you reach your family maximum, PharmaCare covers 100% of your family's eligible medication costs for the rest of the year.

For example, if your net family income is below \$15,000, you do not need to reach a deductible; you receive 70% coverage immediately. If your family net income was \$15,000 a year, your family maximum would be \$300. After your family had paid that amount towards eligible prescription costs, the plan would cover 100% of your eligible costs for the rest of the year.

Would you like an estimate of your deductible and family maximum? PharmaCare provides a calculator on their website. It is available at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/plani/calculator/calculator.html.

What medications are covered?

Nearly all anti-epileptic medications are covered.

Drugs that have not been approved for use in Canada are generally not covered. However, when a medication is not covered, your physician can complete a form and fax it to PharmaCare requesting special coverage. This is more likely to be approved if all other drugs have been tried without success and the physician provides evidence that the drug is effective in your condition.

How else can I get support?

Those with Extended Health Coverage for prescription medications can often receive support for that portion of the prescription cost that is not covered by PharmaCare. However, it is also recommended that people with third party insurance coverage (e.g. Blue Cross), be registered for Fair PharmaCare. Some third party insurers require you to register for the provincial plan.

More Information

For more information about PharmaCare visit the PharmaCare website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare or call Health Insurance BC (the organization that administers both the B.C. Medical Services Plan and PharmaCare on behalf of the provincial government)

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You can join the BC Epilepsy Society as a member and receive all the program and service benefits.

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