



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH BENEFITS

# Pharmacy

First Nations Health Benefits (Health Benefits) provides coverage for medications and certain pharmacy items and services. The pharmacy benefit is administered through a partnership between Health Benefits, BC PharmaCare, and Pacific Blue Cross (PBC). Prescription medications are one part of a client's wellness journey.

## What is covered?

Health Benefits covers items from the following categories:

- ✓ Prescription drugs
- ✓ Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs
- ✓ Non-drug OTC items (e.g., lancets for diabetic use)

BC PharmaCare is the primary provider of eligible pharmacy items and services through Plan W. PBC provides supplementary pharmacy coverage. Clients are encouraged to contact Health Benefits at **1.855.550.5454** to confirm their enrollment in Plan W.

If clients require a drug not normally covered or only partially covered, in some cases, a prescriber can apply for Special Authority through PharmaCare to request coverage for these items. Special Authority must be approved before the prescription can be filled. For a full description of the pharmacy benefit, please visit [www.fnha.ca/benefits/pharmacy](http://www.fnha.ca/benefits/pharmacy).

## Over-the Counter Drugs

OTC drugs and non-drug items can treat or support some conditions or illnesses. Consult with your primary care provider on how to best manage your condition or illness. OTC drugs and items include, but are not limited to:

- Help for minor pain and inflammation
- Relief of cold and flu symptoms
- Treatment for nausea or constipation
- Allergy treatment
- Eye drops for dry eyes and irritations
- Supplies such as ketone strips (for diabetes) or inhaler spacers
- Disinfectants and treatment for skin conditions including fungus and head lice
- Vitamins/supplements including multivitamins for children and pregnant women only

Ask your provider for information to help you understand your options and coverage.

## Exclusions

Examples of pharmacy items or medications that will not be covered include:

- Alternative therapies (e.g., glucosamine and evening primrose oil)
- Fees for writing prescriptions or forms
- Vaccinations for travel

## Working with providers

Clients will only be covered if they obtain pharmacy items and services from pharmacies registered with PBC and PharmaCare. Items and services purchased from other pharmacies are not eligible for reimbursement. Pharmacies registered with PBC and PharmaCare can direct bill for all eligible pharmacy items and services.

Most pharmacy items are fully covered under the pharmacy benefit. If clients are asked to pay for their medication at the pharmacy counter, it's likely that the item is not covered. Clients should ask their pharmacy provider for a recommendation that is covered by the Health Benefits pharmacy benefit.

# Accessing Pharmacy Benefits

SEPTEMBER 2019

1

- Client visits a health care provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist) who prescribes or recommends a treatment.
- Coverage for some OTC items is available without a prescription.

2

- If a prescribed item is not on the PharmaCare Plan W or PBC formulary, the prescriber requests Special Authority or Prior Authorization directly from PharmaCare or PBC.

3

- The pharmacy provider bills the prescription or OTC item and processes payment, either through PharmaCare Plan W or PBC.

4

- Client receives their medication or over-the-counter item.
- The pharmacist is available to provide information about healthy medication use and to answer any questions the client may have, such as how to take the medication, how to know the medication is working, and any possible side-effects of the medication.