Ontario Drug Benefit Program

What you should know about the Ontario Drug Benefit Program

The Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program is part of Ontario Public Drug Programs.

Who?

Through the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care covers most of the cost of prescription drug products listed in the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Formulary, as well as some exceptional cases. If you belong to one of the following groups of Ontario residents and you have a valid Ontario health card, you are eligible for drug coverage under the ODB Program:

- people 65 years of age and older;
- residents of long-term care homes;
- residents of Homes for Special Care;
- people receiving professional services under the Home Care program;
- Trillium Drug Program registrants.

In addition, if you are receiving social assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program assistance), you are eligible for ODB coverage.

What?

- As long as the drug products are prescribed by an authorized Ontario prescriber, the ODB Program covers for prescription drug products listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary/Comparative Drug Index (Formulary), including some nutrition products and diabetic testing agents. In addition, drug products that are not listed on the Formulary are also considered for coverage through the ministry's Exceptional Access Program (EAP) on a case-by-case basis following a written request by a patient’s physician. (For more information link to EAP fact sheet).
- The ODB does not cover the following products: syringes and other diabetic supplies such as lancets and glucometers, eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, or compression stockings.
Where?

The ODB Program automatically pays for the above listed drug products for people eligible for ODB coverage if the drugs are purchased:

- in an accredited Ontario pharmacy that is on-line with the ministry's Health Network System; or
- from an Ontario doctor licensed to sell prescription drug products who is on-line with the ministry’s Health Network System
- Prescription drugs purchased outside Ontario are not reimbursed by the ODB program.

Costs

Under the ODB program, ODB eligible recipients may be asked to pay some portion of their prescription drug product cost as follows:

- Single seniors (people aged 65 or older) who have an annual net income of $16,018 or more and senior couples with a combined annual net income of $24,175 or more pay a $100 deductible per senior per year in ODB eligible prescription charges before they are eligible for drug coverage under the ODB program. After the $100 deductible is paid, they pay up to $6.11 toward the dispensing fee each time they fill an ODB eligible prescription.
- Seniors who have an annual net income under the above mentioned levels and all other ODB eligible recipients, including Trillium Drug Program recipients (after their Trillium deductible is paid), may be asked to pay up to $2 each time they fill a prescription for an ODB eligible drug product.

The benefit year for all ODB recipients starts on August 1 and ends on July 31 of the following year.

Ontario Public Drug Programs – General Inquiries
Tel: 416-327-8109
Toll-free: 1-866-811-9893
ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT:
TRILLIUM DRUG PROGRAM

The Trillium Drug Program (TDP) is intended for Ontario residents who have high prescription drug costs in relation to their net household income. In the same manner as the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, the TDP provides coverage for prescription drug products listed on the Formulary. Drug products not listed on the Formulary are also considered for coverage for TDP recipients through the ministry's Exceptional Access program. Please note that deductibles and co-payments will apply to this income-based program.

Eligibility

You can register in the Trillium Drug Program if you:

- Comply with all requirements set out in the regulations under the ODBA
- Do not have private insurance coverage or your private insurance does not cover 100% of your prescription drug costs; and you
- Have valid Ontario Health Insurance (OHIP) and are a resident of Ontario; and you
- Are not eligible for drug coverage as another category of recipient under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program (i.e., not a senior over 65 years of age, not a social assistance recipient, not receiving professional Home Care services, or not a resident of a Long-Term Care Home or Home for Special Care).

Deductibles and Co-Payments

The program runs from August 1 to July 31 of the following year. Before you receive coverage for eligible prescription drug products through the TDP, your household must pay for a set amount of your prescription drug purchases, otherwise known as the "deductible", each year starting August 1. The deductible is paid in four installments over the program year and is calculated based on net household income and household size. For example, a household with an annual deductible of $500 will pay for the first $125 of prescriptions purchased at the start of each quarter on August 1, November 1, February 1, and May 1. After the deductible is paid in each quarter, the household will be eligible to receive drug benefits for that quarter, and will be asked to pay up to $2 per prescription each time they purchase an eligible drug product. Any unpaid deductible in a quarter will be added to the next quarter's deductible. New applicants to the TDP can choose the date within the program year on which they wish to be enrolled. The deductible will be prorated, that is, the deductible will be based on the number of
days left in the program year. Please note that proration of the deductible will apply only for the first year that a household/member is enrolled in the program.

Drug Costs

Not all drug costs count towards your Trillium Drug Program deductible or are covered as program benefits. To ensure coverage under the program, check with your pharmacist or health care provider to make sure your prescriptions fit into one of the following categories:

- Listed in the Formulary; or
- Listed on the Facilitated Access List of HIV/AIDS drugs; or
- Approved for coverage through the ministry's Exceptional Access program

Trillium Drug Program Application Forms and Guides are available at local pharmacies, online, or by calling 416-642-3038 or 1-800-575-5386 (toll free)

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT: SPECIAL DRUG PROGRAM

Through the Special Drugs Program, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care covers the full cost of certain outpatient drugs used in the treatment of specific conditions. The program covers:

- Specific drugs for the treatment of cystic fibrosis;
- Amoxicillin, ascorbic acid (Vitamin C), deferoxamine, folic acid, hydrocortisone injection, penicillin and trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole for the treatment of thalassaemia;
- Zidovudine (AZT) for the treatment of HIV infection;
- Erythropoietin (EPO) for people with end stage renal disease
- Cyclosporine for people who have had a solid organ or bone marrow transplant
- Human growth hormone for children with growth failure
- Clozapine for treatment of schizophrenia
- Alglucerase for people with Gaucher's Disease

Eligibility

The Special Drugs Program will cover costs for the above drugs if you:
• Are an Ontario resident with valid Ontario Health Insurance (OHIP) and
• Are a patient with one of the diseases or conditions covered
• Meet the established clinical criteria and/or
• Are under the care of an approved physician/designated care centre.

As a way for the ministry to ensure that the appropriate treatments for the diseases and conditions are prescribed, special facilities - usually at hospitals - have been designated to distribute these drugs. In some cases, special review committees have been established to ensure that the clinical criteria are met.

How Can You Apply?

Speak with your doctor about the program to find out if you may be covered, and the locations where the treatments are available.

Costs

The Special Drugs Program does not have any deductibles or co-payments. If you meet conditions for coverage, you will not have to pay for any portion of your treatments.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT:
NEW DRUG FUNDING PROGRAM FOR CANCER PATIENTS

The New Drug Funding Program (NDFP), which is administered by Cancer Care Ontario on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, provides about 75% of the overall funding for intravenous cancer drugs. NDFP funding is for new and approved intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospitals. The other 25% is for older drugs approved before the NDFP was created and is covered by the hospitals’ budgets. Ontario Public Drug Programs decide what drugs are funded, relying on advice from an expert advisory committee. Historically, each hospital paid for its own intravenous cancer drugs, which led to unequal access at different hospitals across the province. Decisions were not always based on evidence about medical benefit and value for money. The NDFP was created to ensure that Ontario patients would have equal access to high-quality intravenous drugs.
The list of NDFP-covered drugs, and the indications for which they are covered, are posted in the Cancer Drugs section of the Cancer Care Ontario website.

**Phone:** 416.971.9800 **Fax:** 416.971.6888

Information on approval of new drugs for cancer care is available on the CED/Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) Subcommittee page of the Drug Submission section of this website.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT: INHERITED METABOLIC DISEASES PROGRAM

Through the Inherited Metabolic Diseases (IMD) program, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care covers the full cost of certain outpatient drugs, supplements and specialty foods used in the treatment of specific metabolic disorders. The IMD Program covers:

- Specific drugs and supplements
- Modified L-Amino Acid mixtures ("medical foods")
- Special Low Protein Foods
- Other supplements
- Infant Feeds
- Complete Enteral Feeds

Only the metabolic disorders and Funded Products as listed in the *List of Disorders, Covered Drugs, Supplements and Specialty Foods* are covered by the IMD Program. As a means to ensure that appropriate treatments are being provided to IMD Program patients, special treatment facilities have been designated to distribute the Funded Products. Decisions about what products are funded are made by the Executive Officer of Ontario Public Drug Programs based on expert advice provided by an advisory committee. For more information on metabolic conditions, visit the ministry’s website on Newborn Screening.

The IMD Program will cover the costs of the foregoing types of products ("Funded Products"), provided that the patient:

- Is an Ontario resident with valid Ontario Health Insurance (OHIP);
• Has been diagnosed with an inherited metabolic disorder for which one of the Funded Products has been prescribed as a treatment;
• Is under the care of a physician from a designated treatment centre;
• Obtains the Funded Products from a designated treatment centre.

To register a patient in the IMD Program, an application and consent form must be completed and submitted to the ministry. Registration is coordinated by specialists at a designated treatment centre.

Inquiries regarding the IMD Program should be directed to:

**Ontario Public Drug Programs**
5700 Yonge Street, 3rd Floor
Toronto ON M2M 4K5
Tel.: 416-327-8109
Fax: 416-327-8123
Email: PublicDrugPrgrms.moh@ontario.ca

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**ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT: RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS PROPHYLAXIS FOR HIGH RISK INFANTS PROGRAM**

Through the Respiratory Syncytial Virus Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infants Program (the "Program"), the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care covers the full cost of the drug palivizumab used to prevent a serious lower respiratory tract infection caused by the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in pediatric patients at high risk for RSV disease.

The drug is only provided during the active season and requires patients to meet the ministry's eligibility criteria for approval.

Palivizumab will be funded for RSV prophylaxis in infants who are residents of Ontario and if they meet one of the following criteria:
• Infants born prematurely at ≤ 32 completed weeks gestation and aged ≤ 6 months at the start of, or during, the local RSV season; or
• Infants 33 – 35 completed weeks gestation and aged ≤ 6 months at the start of, or during the local RSV season for infants who DO NOT live in isolated communities AND have a Risk Assessment Tool Score of 49 to 100, or
• Infants 33 – 35 completed weeks gestation and aged ≤ 6 months at the start of, or during the local RSV season and who LIVE IN isolated communities where hospital care is not readily accessible, or
• Children < 24 months of age with bronchopulmonary dysplasia/chronic lung disease (BPD/CLD) and who required oxygen and/or medical therapy within the 6 months preceding the RSV season, or
• Children < 24 months of age with hemodynamically significant (HS) cyanotic or acyanotic congenital heart disease (CHD); requiring corrective surgery or is on cardiac medication for hemodynamic significant disease.

Infants with other specific medical illnesses that places them at high risk of hospitalizations and complications from a RSV infection may also be considered for prophylaxis, if they meet necessary requirements.

The following are the links to the guidelines, general information, and applicable forms on the 2009/2010 RSV prophylaxis season for health care professionals:

Forms and Risk Assessment Tool:

• Enrollment/Request Form
• General Multi-Patient Request Form

Email: RSVProphylaxisProgram@ontario.ca

To enroll a patient in the Program, an enrollment form must be completed by the patient's physician and submitted to the ministry. Hospitals and specific clinics have the options of submitting orders for palivizumab supplies on multi-patient order forms once a patient have been approved and enrolled in the program.

Inquiries regarding the Program should be directed to:

Ontario Public Drug Programs, Exceptional Access Program Branch
5700 Yonge Street, 3rd Floor
The Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program is one of the most generous drug benefit programs in Canada, providing coverage for over 3,300 drug products, including nutrition products and diabetic testing agents. Drugs that are not listed in the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary/Comparative Drug Index (Formulary) are also considered for coverage through the Ministry's Exceptional Access program on a case-by-case basis.

About the Formulary
Through the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care covers most of the cost of prescription drug products listed in the Formulary.

The Formulary serves as a:
- Guide to practitioners and pharmacists regarding drug products which are eligible for coverage under ODB.
- Guide to professional committees in hospitals and institutions in the selection of drug products.
- Guide to drug product interchangeability in respect of drug products that have been designated interchangeable under Ontario legislation.
- Comparative pricing guide for drug products.

This information requires knowledgeable interpretation and is intended primarily for professional health care practitioners, pharmacies, hospitals and organizations associated with the manufacture, distribution and use of pharmaceutical preparations.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care printed the first Comparative Drug Index in 1971 and Edition 1 of the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary was published in 1974. The integrated Formulary was first produced in 1976, to
define the benefits provided for eligible recipients. The Formulary was developed in consultation with the ministry's external expert drug advisory committee, the Drug Quality and Therapeutics Committee (DQTC, now known as the Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED). For many years, the Formulary has set the provincial standard for price, quality and interchangeability of drug products. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has liaised with the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, the Ontario College of Pharmacists, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and other professional and patient groups as required on the content and policies embodied in this publication.

Formulary Search
Edition 40: Update 13 (PDF)

e-Formulary
https://www.healthinfo.moh.gov.on.ca/formulary/index.jsp