

# BC PharmaCare Drug Information

The drug below is being considered for possible coverage under the B.C. PharmaCare program. PharmaCare is a government-funded drug plan that helps British Columbians with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and specific medical supplies. For more information on PharmaCare, visit [Ministry of Health - PharmaCare](#).

PharmaCare reviews each drug for treating a specific illness or medical condition (known as an “indication”). If a decision is made to cover the drug, it will be only for that illness or condition.

In some cases, PharmaCare may cover a drug only for people who have the illness or condition and have not responded to other drugs used to treat that illness or condition.

For more information on PharmaCare’s drug coverage review process, see the last page of this information sheet.

Information about the drug	
Generic name (scientific name)	<b>alemtuzumab</b>
Brand name	Lemtrada™
Manufacturer	Genzyme Canada Inc.
Indication	Lemtrada™ is used to treat relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis in adults.
Has the drug been reviewed by the Common Drug Review (CDR) (see the note below this table.)	Yes. For more information about the CDR’s review of alemtuzumab (Lemtrada™) you can <a href="#">Search the CDR Reports</a>
Public input start date	Wednesday April 22, 2015
Public input closing date	Wednesday May 20, 2015 <b>AT MIDNIGHT</b>
How is the drug taken?	Lemtrada™ is administered via intravenous infusion (into a vein).
How often is the drug is taken?	Lemtrada™ is initially given over 5 consecutive days followed by a second cycle 12 months later given over 3 consecutive days.

Information about the drug	
General drug and/or drug study information	<p>Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). In MS, the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective layer (myelin) around the nerve fibres of the central nervous system, causing inflammation. The inflammation causes the symptoms that are often called a “relapse” or “attack”. In Relapsing-Remitting MS (RRMS) patients experience relapses followed by periods of recovery.</p> <p>Lemtrada™ is a monoclonal antibody. Monoclonal antibodies are proteins which bind to a unique site (called an antigen) on cells.</p> <p>The drug works on the immune system so that it may not attack the nervous as system as much.</p> <p>Studies looked at the following to assess whether alemtuzumab is helpful and safe in the treatment of RRMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relapse (inflammation)</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Quality of life</li> <li>• Magnetic resonance imaging results: changes/additions/reductions in lesions</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Medication acceptance</li> <li>• Relapse requiring corticosteroids or hospitalization</li> <li>• Bad effects, serious bad effects and leaving the study due to these bad effects</li> <li>• Death</li> </ul>
Other considerations	None

**Note:**

The Common Drug Review (CDR) is a national organization that reviews drugs on behalf of Canadian public sector plans when manufacturers want to have the jurisdictions provide coverage for the drugs. For detailed information on B.C. PharmaCare’s drug review process, including the role of the CDR in that process, see [The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview](#).

Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication			
generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Usual Dose	Annual Cost of Therapy
alemtuzumab (Lemtrada™)	Under Review	One infusion daily for 5 days; then after 12 months one infusion daily for 3 days	Year 1-\$56,526; Year 2: \$33,918
dimethyl fumarate (Tecfidera®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Two capsule twice daily	\$25,320
fingolimod (Gilenya®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One capsule daily	\$32,640

Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication			
generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Usual Dose	Annual Cost of Therapy
giatiramer acetate (Copaxone®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One subcutaneous injection daily	\$17,326
interferon beta-1a (Avonex®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One intramuscular injection per week	\$22,154
interferon beta-1a (Rebif®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One injection three times weekly	\$25,692
interferon beta-1b (Extavia®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One subcutaneous injection every other day	\$18,988
interferon beta-1b (Betaseron®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One subcutaneous injection every other day	\$18,988
natalizumab (Tysabri®)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One intravenous infusion every 4 weeks	\$39,799
teriflunomide (Aubagio™)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	One tablet daily	\$20,684

### The Drug Review Process in B.C.

A manufacturer submits a request to the Ministry of Health (Ministry).

An independent group called the [Drug Benefit Council \(Council\)](#) gives advice to the Ministry. The Council looks at:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called the [Common Drug Review \(CDR\)](#)
- whether the drug is a good value for the people of B.C. and what it costs
- ethical considerations involved with covering or not covering the drug
- input from physicians, patients, caregivers, patient groups and drug submission sponsors

The Ministry makes PharmaCare coverage decisions by taking into account:

- the existing PharmaCare policies, programs and resources
- the evidence--informed advice of the Council
- the drugs already covered by PharmaCare that are used to treat similar medical conditions
- the overall cost of covering the drug

For more information about the B.C. Drug Review Process, visit: [The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview](#).

**This document is intended for information only.**

It does not take the place of advice from a physician or other qualified health care provider.