

About PharmaCare

B.C. PharmaCare helps British Columbians with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and specific medical supplies.

PharmaCare Coverage

The Ministry of Health Services (Ministry) makes PharmaCare coverage decisions by considering existing PharmaCare policies, programs and resources and the evidence-based recommendations of an independent advisory body called the Drug Benefit Council (DBC). The DBC's advice to the Ministry is based upon a review of many considerations, including available clinical and pharmacoeconomic evidence, clinical practice and ethical considerations, and the recommendations of the national Common Drug Review, when applicable.

Inside

Page 1 includes the Ministry decision and reasons in wording that is easier for readers without a medical background to understand. **Page 2** summarizes the DBC recommendation, the Ministry's decision and the reasons for the Ministry's decision.

Ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide (Altace HCT®) for high blood pressure

Understanding the DBC Recommendation and PharmaCare Coverage Decision

Background

- **Blood pressure** is a measure of the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. High blood pressure is called hypertension and can damage the blood vessels, heart, kidneys and eyes.
- People with **high blood pressure** are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Lifestyle changes and drug treatment can decrease the risk.
- The combination of the two drugs **ramipril** plus **hydrochlorothiazide** in a single tablet is called **Altace HCT®**. Ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide work together to lower blood pressure.
 - **Ramipril** is part of a group of drugs called the angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors. It lowers blood pressure by blocking angiotensin formed in the body. Angiotensin is a substance in the body that causes the blood vessels to contract.
 - **Hydrochlorothiazide** is a thiazide diuretic or water pill. It lowers blood pressure by decreasing the amount of salt and water in the body.

Why was this drug reviewed?

- Drug company request

What did the review find?

- Studies show that using ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide reduces blood pressure more than using either drug alone.
- Studies show that using ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide is as safe as using either drug alone.
- The combination of ramipril and hydrochlorothiazide is less costly than buying the two drugs separately.

What decision was made?

- Altace HCT® will be covered as a **regular benefit**.

Key Term

- **Regular benefits** are prescription drugs that are covered according to the rules of a patient's PharmaCare plan including any annual deductible requirement. Patients do not need Special Authority from PharmaCare for coverage of these drugs.

This document is intended for information only. It does not take the place of advice from a physician or other qualified health care provider.

Please visit us online to find out more about the Pharmaceutical Services Division and the PharmaCare program at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme. To find out more about how drugs are considered for PharmaCare coverage, visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/formulary.



Ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide (Altace HCT®) for hypertension

Drug Class

- Angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor plus thiazide diuretic

Available Dosage Forms

- 2.5 mg/12.5 mg, 5 mg/12.5 mg, 10 mg/12.5 mg, 5 mg/25 mg, 10 mg/25 mg tablets (combination product ramipril/hydrochlorothiazide)

Sponsor/Requestor

- Sanofi Aventis Canada Inc.

Submission (Request) to PharmaCare

- Health Canada has approved ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide for the following indication:
 - Treatment of essential hypertension in patients for whom this combination therapy is appropriate.

Drug Benefit Council (DBC) Recommendation

- Ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide be listed as a regular benefit.

Reasons for the Ministry of Health Services Decision

- A literature search identified one randomized controlled trial (RCT) comparing the ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide combination versus ramipril monotherapy and hydrochlorothiazide monotherapy.
- There is sufficient evidence that ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide provides a statistically significant reduction in diastolic blood pressure compared to hydrochlorothiazide alone.
- There is sufficient evidence that ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide provides a significant reduction in systolic blood pressure compared to ramipril alone.
- There was no statistically significant difference in the incidence of adverse effects with ramipril plus hydrochlorothiazide compared to each drug alone.
- The ramipril and hydrochlorothiazide combination product is less costly compared to equivalent doses of generic ramipril and hydrochlorothiazide.

Decision and Status

- **Regular benefit**
- Effective December 17, 2008

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