

# Drug Coverage Decision for B.C. PharmaCare

## About PharmaCare

B.C. PharmaCare is a government-funded drug plan. It helps British Columbians with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and specific medical supplies.

## Details of Drug Reviewed

<b>Drug</b>	etidronate in combination with calcium carbonate
Brand Name	ACT-etidrocal
Dosage Form(s)	400 mg-1,250 mg
Manufacturer	Actavis Pharma Company
<b>Submission Type</b>	Ministry initiated review
Use Reviewed	Prevention of fractures due to osteoporosis
Common Drug Review (CDR)	No, CDR did not review
Drug Benefit Council (DBC)	DBC met on June 4, 2018. In their review, the DBC considered different sources such as guidelines, meta-analysis and a systematic review including: a 2006 Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) Technology Report titled <i>Bisphosphonates for the primary and secondary prevention of osteoporotic fractures in postmenopausal women: a meta-analysis</i> ; a September 2014 Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) Clinical Practice Guideline on Osteoporosis in Menopause; a September-October 2011 Therapeutics Initiative Systematic Review of the Efficacy of Bisphosphonates; and a February 2011 BC Provincial Academic Detailing Service (PAD) evidence-informed review on medications for Osteoporosis with a focus on bisphosphonates.
<b>Drug Coverage Decision</b>	<b>Delist from PharmaCare Formulary, new status is Non-Benefit</b>
Date	February 19, 2019
Reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etidronate in combination with calcium carbonate is currently listed as a regular benefit, subject to the Low Cost Alternative policy. The brand name etidronate product (Didrocal®) is no longer available in Canada, and there have been repeated shortages of generic etidronate products.</li> <li>• Etidronate's unrestricted access makes it available as a first-line therapy in primary and secondary prevention of fractures due to osteoporosis. This is in contrast to current practice guidelines, which either do not recommend etidronate use or recommend it only as a second-line therapy in patients who have tried other oral biphosphonates.</li> <li>• As such, a review was initiated by the Ministry of Health. The Drug Benefit Council recommended that PharmaCare no longer cover etidronate for primary or secondary prevention of fractures due to osteoporosis and to provide Special Authority coverage for alendronate or risedronate for patients currently taking etidronate. The Ministry supports the DBC recommendation.</li> <li>• All patients currently taking etidronate have already been granted Special Authority coverage for both alendronate and risedronate. Patients currently using etidronate should make an</li> </ul>

	appointment with their prescriber to discuss available treatment options before coverage ends on February 19, 2019. In the interim, coverage for all three oral bisphosphonates will be available to patients currently using etidronate.
Other Information	For more information please consult the 18-011 edition of the BC PharmaCare Newsletter at the following link: <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare/newsletters/news18-011.pdf">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare/newsletters/news18-011.pdf</a>

### 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 \(DBC\)](#) gives advice to the Ministry. The DBC looks at:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called the [Common Drug Review \(CDR\)](#)
- what the drug costs and whether it is a good value for the people of B.C.
- 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 DBC
- the drugs already covered by PharmaCare that are used to treat similar medical conditions
- the overall cost of covering the drug

Visit the [The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview](#) and [Ministry of Health - PharmaCare](#) for more information.

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

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