



Drug Coverage Decision for BC PharmaCare

About PharmaCare

BC PharmaCare is a publicly funded drug plan that helps B.C. residents pay for most prescription drugs and pharmacy services, and some medical devices and supplies.

Details of Drug Reviewed

Drug	upadacitinib
Brand name	Rinvoq®
Dosage form(s)	15 mg, 30 mg, and 45 mg extended-release tablets
Manufacturer	AbbVie Corporation
Submission type	New Submission
Indication reviewed	For the treatment of moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC) in adults who have demonstrated prior treatment failure, i.e., an inadequate response to, loss of response to, or intolerance to at least one of conventional, and/or biologic therapy.
Canada’s Drug Agency (CDA-AMC) Clinical Reimbursement Reviews (CRR)	CDA-AMC recommended: to Reimburse with clinical criteria and/or conditions. Visit the CRR website for more details .
Drug Benefit Council (DBC)	The DBC now screens drug submissions under review by CDA-AMC to determine whether or not a full DBC review is necessary, based on past DBC reviews, recommendations, and existing PharmaCare coverage. If a full DBC review is determined to not be required, the Ministry’s drug coverage decision will be based on the Canadian Drug Expert Committee (CDEC) recommendation and an internal review only. Since upadacitinib is similar to other drugs that were previously reviewed by DBC for the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active UC, the Ministry may accept the CDEC’s recommendation for upadacitinib.

Drug Coverage Decision	Non-benefit
Date	October 3, 2024
Reason(s)	<p>Drug coverage decision is consistent with the CDEC recommendation to reimburse Rinvoq only if the cost of Rinvoq does not exceed the drug program cost of treatment with the least costly relevant comparator (i.e., biologics or targeted synthetic drugs) reimbursed for the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active UC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from 3 clinical trials demonstrated that patients were more likely to have disease remission after 8 weeks and after 60 weeks of treatment with Rinvoq than with placebo. Patients were also more likely to have healing of the lining of the large intestine with Rinvoq versus placebo. • However, there was uncertainty regarding the comparative clinical effectiveness and safety of Rinvoq compared with biologics and tofacitinib (generics) due to a lack of direct comparative evidence with an active treatment. • Based on CDA-AMC CRR’s assessment of the health economic evidence, Rinvoq does not represent good value to the health care system at the public list price. The committee determined that there is not enough evidence to justify a greater cost for Rinvoq compared with the least costly biologic or targeted synthetic drug (e.g., tofacitinib) for patients with UC. • The pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA) was involved in negotiations with the manufacturer for this product; however, BC opted-out of the pCPA negotiations as sufficient value was not achieved to meet CDEC’s recommendations. • Upadacitinib is a Janus Kinase (JAK)-inhibitor. Tofacitinib (generics), another JAK-inhibitor, is also indicated for UC and is a PharmaCare Limited Coverage benefit. Tofacitinib tablets, like upadacitinib, provide patients with an oral JAK inhibitor treatment option for UC.

The drug review process in B.C.

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

An independent group called the [Drug Benefit Council \(DBC\)](#) gives advice to the Ministry by considering:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called [Canada's Drug and Health Technology Agency \(CADTH\)](#)
- what the drug costs and whether funding it provides good value to the province
- ethical considerations of covering and not covering the drug
- input from physicians, patients, caregivers, patient groups and drug submission sponsors

The Ministry makes a BC PharmaCare coverage decision by taking into account:

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

Visit [BC PharmaCare](#) and [Drug reviews](#) 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.