

# BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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**Q:** Which B.C. residents with mild-moderate COVID-19 are recommended to be treated with Paxlovid™ (nirmatrelvir/ritonavir)?

**A:** The answer is in the current edition of [PAD Refills](#). Make sure to subscribe so you don't miss out on news and updates!

The PharmaCare Newsletter team works from the territory of the Lekwungen People, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Our gratitude extends to them, and all Indigenous Peoples on whose territories and lands we build relationships.

BC PharmaCare counts on pharmacies and device providers to practice cultural safety and humility. To learn more, read *Coming Together for Wellness*, a series of articles by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and PharmaCare, and consider taking the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety course.

The PharmaCare Newsletter is published by the Pharmaceutical, Laboratory & Blood Services Division to provide information to B.C.'s healthcare providers.

[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarepharmacists](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarepharmacists)  
[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacareprescribers](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacareprescribers)  
[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredeviceproviders](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredeviceproviders)



## Shingrix® vaccine administration

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To claim the drug administration fee for administering a Shingrix® vaccination, pharmacists should use PIN 66128366. For instructions on how to enter this PIN in PharmaNet, refer to the [Drug administration fee](#) webpage.

Providers should no longer use the PIN previously paid through Pacific Blue Cross (PBC) (66123642) when administering Shingrix for a First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) client.

The Shingrix vaccine is included on the FNHA supplementary drug formulary that is adjudicated through PBC. It is covered for FNHA clients who are 60 years or older. In exceptional cases, use the [FNHA exceptional request form: Shingrix® vaccine](#).

If you have any questions about Shingrix vaccine coverage for FNHA clients, please contact FNHA Health Benefits & Services at 1-855-550-5454

### Resources

- [FNHA Shingrix® coverage](#)
- [FNHA exception request form: Shingrix® vaccine](#)
- [Drug administration fee](#)

## Continuing education module through UBC-CPD for alcohol use disorders

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UBC Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has developed a new course for providers to support routine screening and treatment for risky and harmful alcohol use. The free, Mainpro+ accredited course, "Alcohol Use: Screening, Determining Risk, and Evidence-Based Treatment", is available as of **September 28, 2024**.

Alcohol is one of the most used substances in B.C. and is consumed throughout the province at rates associated with a high risk of adverse health impacts. Through education, routine screening, promotion of lower-risk drinking practices, and tailored treatment plans, health-care providers can help mitigate the negative consequences of alcohol use and improve outcomes for individuals and communities.

For more information and to register, visit the course webpage: [Alcohol Use: Screening, Determining Risk, and Evidence-Based Treatment](#).

### Resources

- [Alcohol Use: Screening, Determining Risk, and Evidence-Based Treatment](#)

## Laboratory test referrals – education and resources

UBC Continuing Pharmacy Professional Development (CPPD) will offer optional accredited clinical education on interpreting laboratory test results, laboratory test stewardship, and utilizing tests to support patient care plans. The education will be offered to pharmacists in B.C. at no cost, beginning in January 2025.

For pharmacists seeking learning opportunities prior to January, the University of Saskatchewan Continuing Pharmacy Education has a 12 CEU course on [Interpreting Laboratory Tests for Medication Management](#). The course costs \$480 for pharmacists living outside of Saskatchewan.

Pharmacists may also reference [BC Guidelines](#) for resources that may be helpful in determining how and when laboratory tests can support medication management.

- [Anemia and Iron Deficiency](#) – includes guidance on monitoring response to oral iron, and recommended frequency of testing for complete blood count (CBC) and ferritin
- [Warfarin](#) – includes guidance on chronic warfarin dosing and international normalized ratio (INR) monitoring
- [Cobalamin \(vitamin B12\) deficiency](#) – includes guidance on B12 testing
- [Thyroid Function Testing](#) – includes guidance on monitoring thyroid disease

Details on training, procedures and other information relevant to pharmacist ordering of laboratory tests will be added to [Pharmacists ordering lab tests](#) as it becomes available.



The banner features a yellow header with the text "Laboratory test referrals". Below this, a blue background contains several elements: a lightbulb icon, an atom icon, a stack of books icon, a yellow arrow pointing right, the text "Beginning in January 2025!", a calendar icon, and a yellow circle containing a test tube and a clipboard icon. A dark blue bar on the left contains the text "Accredited clinical education" in yellow.

### Resources

- [Interpreting Laboratory Tests for Medication Management – University of Saskatchewan](#)
- [BC Guidelines](#)
  - [Anemia and Iron Deficiency](#)
  - [Warfarin](#)
  - [Cobalamin \(vitamin B12\) deficiency](#)
  - [Thyroid Function Testing](#)
- [Pharmacists ordering lab tests](#)

## Lytton Business Restart Program

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Potential “new” community pharmacies in Lytton may be eligible for funding made available through the [Lytton Business Restart Program](#).

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting the economic recovery of Lytton’s business community. The Lytton Business Restart Program provides funding to eligible small businesses that will operate in Lytton, B.C. The program, delivered by PacifiCan, will help both returning and new businesses by providing support for various restart/start-up costs such as equipment, supplies, and construction expenses.

Visit [Lytton Business Restart Program](#) to learn more about the initiative and discover how to apply for funding.

### Resources

- [Lytton Business Restart Program](#)
- [Lytton Business Restart Program information sheet](#)

## RAT kit program continues

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The BC government will continue to provide COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits free of charge to the public through community pharmacies for the upcoming respiratory virus season and to support access to Paxlovid for eligible patients.

PharmaCare pays pharmacies [a distribution fee of \\$75 per case](#) to pharmacies to provide COVID-19 RAT kits free of charge to the public.

### Reminder: RAT kit expiry dates

Pharmacies are reporting that some Artron RAT kits, [with expiry dates extended by Health Canada](#) by 6 months to October 2024, are dry and unusable.

Tests with later expiration dates are available through distributors. Pharmacies are encouraged to check inventory and expiration dates ahead of the upcoming respiratory virus season.

For other expiry date information, refer to the [BC Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 website](#).

Expired (and dry) tests may be disposed of in regular waste.

### Resources

- [Section 8.15, PharmaCare Policy Manual – Rapid antigen test kit distribution](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 website](#)

## RAT kit payment update

Since the last newsletter, PharmaCare has paid pharmacies for COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kit distribution as follows:

Payment month	Payment date
July 2024	October 1, 2024

Pharmacies are paid \$75 for each case of RAT kits distributed, and pharmacists are reminded to enter the correct PIN for each case of RAT kits distributed.

- BTNX: 66128325
- Artron: 66128338

### Resources

- [2024 PharmaCare Provider Payment Schedule \(PDF, 165KB\)](#)

## Update your PharmaCare bookmarks

Some PharmaCare webpages have moved! The following pages are now located under [BC PharmaCare programs](#). Please visit and bookmark the new location of your favourite webpages.

- [Special Authority](#)
  - [Special Authority drug list](#)
- [Limited coverage drugs](#)
- [Low Cost Alternative \(LCA\) program](#)
- [Reference Drug Program \(RDP\)](#)
- [Biosimilars Initiative](#)
- [Trial Prescription Program](#)
- [Blood Glucose testing](#)
- [COPD inhaler criteria](#)
- [IIMOAT records in PharmaNet](#)
- [Enrol as a PharmaCare provider](#)

Update your PharmaCare bookmarks!



## Formulary and listing updates

### Limited Coverage benefits: upadacitinib (Rinvoq®), ustekinumab biosimilars (Steqeyma™, Wezlana™)

PharmaCare has added the following Limited Coverage items to the PharmaCare drug list. Special Authority approval is required for coverage.

<b>Drug name</b>	ustekinumab biosimilar (Steqeyma™)		
<b>Date</b>	September 17, 2024		
<b>Indication</b>	For the treatment of adults with chronic moderate to severe <a href="#">plaque psoriasis (PsO)</a> , the treatment of adults with active <a href="#">psoriatic arthritis (PsA)</a> , and the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active <a href="#">Crohn's disease (CD)</a> .		
<b>DIN</b>	02550245 02550253 02550261	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	45 mg/ 0.5 mL solution in a pre-filled syringe (PFS) 90 mg/1.0 mL solution in a PFS 130 mg/26 mL (5 mg/mL) solution in a vial

<b>Drug name</b>	ustekinumab biosimilar (Wezlana™)		
<b>Date</b>	September 17, 2024		
<b>Indication</b>	For the treatment of adults with chronic moderate to severe <a href="#">plaque psoriasis (PsO)</a> , the treatment of adults with active <a href="#">psoriatic arthritis (PsA)</a> , the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active <a href="#">Crohn's disease (CD)</a> , and the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active <a href="#">ulcerative colitis (UC)</a> .		
<b>DIN</b>	02544180 02544199 02544202 02544210	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	45 mg/ 0.5 mL solution in a pre-filled syringe (PFS) 90 mg/1.0 mL solution in a PFS 45 mg/0.5 mL solution in a vial 130 mg/26 mL (5 mg/mL) solution in a vial

<b>Drug name</b>	<a href="#">upadacitinib (Rinvoq®)</a>		
<b>Date</b>	September 17, 2024		
<b>Indication</b>	For the treatment of adults with moderately to severely active Crohn's disease (CD).		
<b>DIN</b>	02495155 02520893 02539721	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	15 mg extended-release tablet 30 mg extended-release tablet 45 mg extended-release tablet

## Non-benefits: dalbavancin (Xydalba®)

Dalbavancin (Xydalba®) is funded in hospitals by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). Dalbavancin (Xydalba) will be a non-benefit for PharmaCare.

<b>Drug name</b>	<a href="#">dalbavancin hydrochloride (Xydalba®)</a>		
<b>Date</b>	September 17, 2024		
<b>Indication</b>	For the treatment of adults with acute bacterial skin and skin structure infections (ABSSSI).		
<b>DIN</b>	02480522	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	500 mg vial

## Discontinuation: inotersen (Tegsedi®)

On October 24, 2024, inotersen (Tegsedi®) 284 mg pre-filled syringes for the treatment of stage 1 or stage 2 polyneuropathy in adult patients with hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis, will be discontinued by the manufacturer from the Canadian market. Alternative options remain available through [Exceptional funding of EDRDs](#).

Please advise patients of this change so they may schedule an appointment with a neurologist.

<b>Drug name</b>	inotersen (Tegsedi®)		
<b>Effective date</b>	October 24, 2024		
<b>Indication</b>	Stage 1 or stage 2 polyneuropathy in adult patients with hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis.		
<b>DIN</b>	02481383	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	Single dose pre-filled syringe, 284 mg/1.5 mL, subcutaneous injection

## Your Voice: Input needed for drug decisions

The knowledge and experience of patients, caregivers and patient groups is integral to [B.C.'s drug review process](#). If you know someone who is taking one of the drugs below or who has a condition any of the drugs treat, please encourage them to visit [www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice](http://www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice).

Your Voice is now accepting input on the following drugs:

Drug	Indication	Input window
ferric carboxymaltose (Ferinject®)	For the treatment of iron deficiency anemia (IDA) in adult and pediatric patients 1 year of age and older.	September 25 to October 22 at 11:59 pm
ferric carboxymaltose (Ferinject®)	For the treatment of iron deficiency (ID) in adult patients with heart failure (HF).	September 25 to October 22 at 11:59 pm
ravulizumab (Ultomiris®)	For the treatment of generalized Myasthenia Gravis (gMG) in adults.	September 25 to October 22 at 11:59 pm
spesolimab (Spevigo®)	For the treatment of generalized pustular psoriasis (GPP), including treatment and prevention of flares, in adults and pediatric patients 12 years of age and older.	September 25 to October 22 at 11:59 pm



### Did you know?

PharmaCare covered 6,079 products between 2022 and 2023. Read [PharmaCare Trends 2022/2023 \(PDF, 1MB\)](#) for more details.