

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)	palonosetron
Brand name	Aloxi[®]
Manufacturer	Eisai Limited
Indication	To help prevent nausea and vomiting that may occur after the use of certain anti-cancer drugs (chemotherapy) in adult patients
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 palonosetron (Aloxi [®]), you can Search the CDR Reports .
Public input start date	Wednesday June 17, 2015
Public input closing date	Wednesday July 15, 2015 AT MIDNIGHT
How is the drug taken?	The drug is taken by mouth.
How often is the drug is taken?	The drug is taken 1 hour before chemotherapy.

Information about the drug	
General drug and/or drug study information	<p>Some types of chemotherapy for the treatment of cancer may cause acute nausea and vomiting. Serotonin, a natural substance in the body, may trigger nausea and vomiting. Aloxi® works by blocking the action of serotonin.</p> <p>Studies looked at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete response in the first 24 hours after receiving chemotherapy • Complete response in the first 1 to 5 days after receiving chemotherapy • Time to treatment failure (vomiting or the need to use other medications to treat nausea or vomiting) • Complete control of nausea symptoms • Number of vomiting episodes • Severity of the symptoms of nausea • The need to use other drugs to treat the nausea and vomiting • Patient satisfaction and quality of life • Bad reactions and serious bad reactions to the drug • The need to stop the drug because of bad reactions • Specific bad reactions to the drug, such as headache, constipation, or tiredness
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	Cost per Course of Treatment
palonosetron (Aloxi®)	Under Review	1 capsule by mouth on day of chemotherapy	Confidential price
palonosetron (Aloxi® IV)	Non-Benefit	1 injection on day of chemotherapy	\$97 ^a
dolasetron mesylate (Anzemet®)	Non-Benefit	1 tablet by mouth within one hour of chemotherapy	\$32
granisetron (generics)	Limited Coverage	1 to 2 tablets or 1 injection on day of chemotherapy	\$11 to \$76

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	Cost per Course of Treatment
ondansetron (Zofran [®] and generics)	Limited Coverage	1 tablet or 1 injection on day of chemotherapy and 1 tablet twice a day for up to 5 days after chemotherapy	\$31 ^b to \$42 ^c
aprepitant (Emend [®])	Limited Coverage	1 capsule once daily starting on day of chemotherapy and continued for 2 days afterward	\$103
fosaprepitant (Emend [®] IV)	Non-Benefit	1 injection on day of chemotherapy	\$103
dexamethasone (generics)	Regular Benefit	2 tablets or 1 injection once daily starting on day of chemotherapy and continued for 2 days afterward	\$2 to \$11

^a Manufacturer's submitted price from their drug submission for this product.

^b Cost based on price for regular tablets and dosed as 8 mg by mouth twice a day over three days.

^c Cost based on price for regular tablets and dosed as 8 mg via intravenous injection (IV) on day 1, followed by 8 mg by mouth on day 1, and 8 mg by mouth twice a day on days 2 and 3.

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
- 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 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.