



Hello, and welcome to PharmaCare 101 – Special Authority

**Special Authority**  
**PharmaCare 101**

 **BRITISH COLUMBIA**


Pharmaceutical, Laboratory & Blood Services Division  
Ministry of Health



## Special Authority

Policy Manual Section 6.3

- Grants full benefit for partial or limited coverage drugs
- Usually not first-line therapy
- Specific medical circumstances (criteria)



PharmaCare covers some drugs only for patients who meet specific clinical criteria. **Special Authority** allows a drug to become a full benefit when it is normally a partially or limited coverage drug.

These are “limited coverage” drugs. They are typically not first-line treatments, and often are more expensive than a fully-covered alternative. In most cases, prescribers apply for Special Authority coverage on behalf of their patients.

Every limited coverage drug has clinical criteria for coverage that people must meet for coverage to be approved. On an exceptional, case-by-case basis, Special Authority can be considered for a drug PharmaCare does not cover, or to people who do not meet the criteria.

## Limited coverage drug list

Visit [gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority](http://gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority) and click on "SA drug list and criteria"

You can view each drug's limited coverage criteria by clicking on its entry in the list

**Limited coverage drugs - alendronate**  
Last updated on January 22, 2018

Special Authority requests can now be submitted online. It's simple and quick!  
[LEARN MORE](#) OR [SIGN UP](#)

This drug is eligible for automatic approval when patient meets criteria and the request is submitted by [eScrips](#).

Generic name	alendronate, including in combination with cholecalciferol (active O2)
Strength	10 mg, 70 mg, 70 mg/5000 IU
Form	tablet

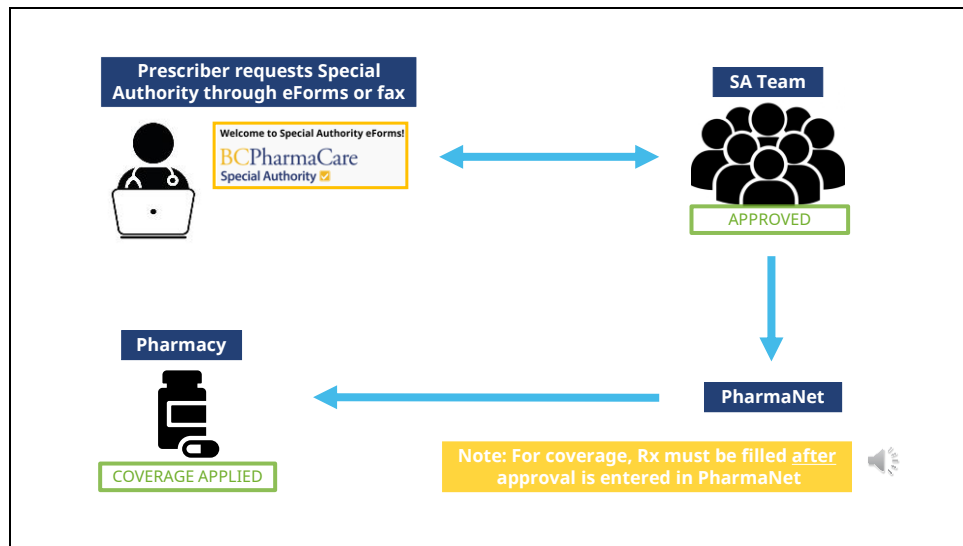
Special Authority criteria	Approval period
Clinical or radiographically documented fracture due to osteoporosis	Indefinite
OR (Discontinued) Induced osteoporosis in patients who are receiving or expected to receive the equivalent dose of 25 mg of zoledronic acid per day or greater <b>AND</b> for 90 consecutive days or longer.	1 year

Print

PharmaCare posts coverage criteria for each limited coverage drug that requires Special Authority.

To view the list of limited coverage drugs, visit [gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority](http://gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority), and click on the "SA drug list and criteria" hyperlink. Each drug has its limited coverage criteria linked to its entry. Here, you can also find information on the length of coverage and renewal criteria and any special notes or practitioner exceptions that may be in place for the drug.

\*\*\*This information is also available in eForms for each drug!




Prescribers request Special Authority by online submission through eForms. Requests can be submitted through fax, though the adjudication process will be slower as it needs to be entered manually.

PharmaCare's Special Authority team reviews all requests and sends the response back to the prescriber. If approved, the Special Authority coverage is uploaded into PharmaNet, so when the person fills the prescription, the Special Authority coverage is applied.


Special Authority approval must be in place before a person fills the prescription for them to get coverage – coverage cannot be applied retroactively.


Special Authority coverage is subject to a person's PharmaCare deductible and family maximum – this means that the amount a person will pay when filling the prescription will vary depending on if they have met their deductible for the year.



## Approval status

- eForms usually have quicker turnaround
- Some eForm submissions eligible for automatic approval
- Fax approvals can vary; urgent requests prioritized

 Patients: check the status of a Special Authority request through Health Gateway at [healthgateway.gov.bc.ca](https://healthgateway.gov.bc.ca)



Special Authority request approvals take time. Requests submitted by eForms often have a quicker turnaround time. Some drugs are even eligible for automatic approval when the person meets all criteria and the request is submitted through eForms.

Approvals for faxed requests can vary depending on the volume of submissions the Special Authority team receives and the nature of the drug that is being evaluated.

People are usually very eager for their Special Authority request to get approved. Some of the most common calls received by the PharmaCare Help Desk are from people wanting to know about the status of their Special Authority request. Please let your patients know that the best way to track the status of their request is online, through their personal Health Gateway profile.



## Renewals

- Special Authority coverage may be for a limited time
- Prescriber submits another request before coverage expires
- Make note of current coverage end date when approval is granted

The type of coverage (limited, indefinite) will be listed on the drug's coverage criteria



Special Authority coverage may be for a limited time (for example, 6 months) or indefinite. If approval is for a limited time, the prescriber will need to submit another Special Authority request before the current one expires if the person needs to remain on the drug.

It's a good idea to make note of the expiry date when PharmaCare approves a Special Authority request and remind people when their coverage will soon be expiring, so they can follow up with their prescriber.



## Pharmacist request for Special Authority

Pharmacists can request coverage when:

- Request is part of Minor Ailments and Contraception Services (MACS)
- Recommending OTC medications
- Adapting a prescription
- Applying for exceptional Plan Z coverage
- Dispensing vancomycin after a hospital stay
- Working for a Health Authority, submitting request as part collaborative work with prescribers



A pharmacist may request Special Authority coverage in certain situations. This includes:

- Requesting as part of a Minor Ailments and Contraception assessment
- Recommending OTC medications such as acetaminophen or NRTs
- Adapting a prescription
- Applying for exceptional Plan Z coverage
- Dispensing vancomycin following a hospital stay, or
- When the pharmacist is directly employed by a BC Health Authority and submitting a request that is part of their Health Authority collaborative work with prescribers

Pharmacists can also assist with requests for medication coverage where the pharmacist is not the prescriber. They can collaborate with the prescriber to create a Special Authority draft in eForms for the prescriber to sign off and submit.



Thanks for watching this PharmaCare 101 video on Special Authority. To watch more videos, visit [gov.bc.ca/PharmaCare101](http://gov.bc.ca/PharmaCare101)