

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)	bimekizumab
Brand name	Bimzelx®
Manufacturer	UCB Canada Inc.
Indication	Active ankylosing spondylitis (AS) in adults
Has the drug been reviewed by Canada’s Drug and Health Technology Agency (CADTH)? (see the note below this table.)	Yes For more information about the CADTH Reimbursement Review (CRR) of bimekizumab (Bimzelx), you can Search the CADTH Reports .
Public input start date	Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Public input closing date	Tuesday, March 26, 2024, AT 11:59 PM
How is the drug taken?	Bimekizumab is given by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection.
How often is the drug injected?	Bimekizumab is injected once every four weeks.

General drug and/or drug study information

Bimekizumab is being reviewed by PharmaCare for the treatment of active AS in adults. AS is a chronic inflammatory disease that primarily affects the spine and the joints that link the pelvis and the lower spine (the sacroiliac joints). The primary symptoms of AS are back pain and spinal stiffness that gets worse over time. AS may also result in compression fractures of the spine, which can injure the spinal cord and the nerves that pass through the spine. Other parts of the body can also be affected by AS, resulting in conditions such as skin psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and inflammation inside the eye (uveitis).

Bimekizumab is a type of drug called a monoclonal antibody or mAb. Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins that recognize and bind to certain proteins in the body. Bimekizumab works by blocking three proteins in the body called interleukin-17A (IL-17A), interleukin-17F (IL-17F), and IL-17AF, which are involved in causing inflammation. This can help to improve the symptoms of AS.

Studies looked at the following:

- Assessment of SpondyloArthritis International Society 40% (ASAS40) response rate at week 16^a
- Changes from baseline in Bath Ankylosing Spondylitis Disease Activity Index (BASDAI) scores at week 16
- Changes from baseline in Bath Ankylosing Spondylitis Functional Index (BASFI) scores at week 16
- Changes from baseline in nocturnal spinal pain (NSP) scores at week 16
- Enthesitis^b-free rates as measured by the Maastricht Ankylosing Spondylitis Enthesitis Score (MASES) index at week 16 in patients with enthesitis at baseline
- Changes from baseline to week 16 in health-related quality of life (HRQoL) using the Ankylosing Spondylitis Quality of Life (ASQoL) and Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire-specific health problem (WAPI-SHP) scales
- Bad reactions
- Serious bad reactions
- Patients leaving the trial due to bad reactions
- Bad reactions of special interest such as serious infections, fungal infections, opportunistic infections, cancers, major adverse cardiac

Information about the drug	
	events, low white blood cell count (neutropenia), suicidal thoughts and behaviours, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), hypersensitivity reactions, and liver injuries or disorders.
Other considerations	None

Note:

Canada’s Drug and Health Technology Agency (CADTH) 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 CADTH Reimbursement Review (CRR) 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 ^c				
generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost of Therapy
bimekizumab (Bimzelx)	Under Review for AS	Pre-filled syringe or autoinjector	Once every 4 weeks	TBC
Tumor Necrosis Factor-alpha (TNF-alpha) Inhibitors				
adalimumab (Biosimilars)	Limited Coverage	Pre-filled syringe or pen	Every 2 weeks	\$12,866
certolizumab pegol (Cimzia)	Limited Coverage	Single-use pre-filled syringe	Once at weeks 0, 2, and 4, then every 2 weeks or every 4 weeks, thereafter	First year: \$20,234 Subsequent: \$18,141
etanercept (biosimilars)	Limited Coverage	Vial, Pre-filled syringe or auto-injector	Once per week	\$13,535

^a The ASAS40 is a measure used to assess improvements in symptoms for people with AS. Specifically, the ASAS40 measures whether a person with AS has at least a 40% improvement in symptoms.

^b Enthesitis is the medical term for inflammation of one or more entheses, which are sites where tendons and ligaments attach to bones.

^c All prices as per PharmaCare Formulary, unless otherwise specified. Any weight-based dosing assumes an average patient weight of 70 kg and wastage of excess medication in vials.

Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication^c				
generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost of Therapy
golimumab SC (Simponi)	Limited Coverage	Pre-filled syringe or auto-injector	Once monthly	\$20,007
infliximab (Renflexis, Avsola)	Limited Coverage	Vial	Initial dose in mg/kg, followed with additional similar doses at 2 and 6 weeks after the first infusion, then every 6-8 weeks thereafter	First year: \$16,565 to \$20,706 Subsequent: \$14,494 to \$18,635
infliximab (Inflectra)	Limited Coverage	Vial		First year: \$17,640 to \$22,050 Subsequent: \$15,435 to \$19,845
Interleukin-17A (IL-17A) Inhibitors				
secukinumab (Cosentyx)	Limited Coverage	Pre-filled syringe or vial	Once at weeks 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4, then once monthly	First year: \$13,901 to \$23,168 Subsequent: \$11,121 to \$22,241
ixekizumab (Taltz)	Non Benefit for AS	Pre-filled syringe or pen	Every 4 weeks	\$23,531
Janus Kinase Inhibitors				
tofacitinib (Xeljanz)	Non-Benefit for AS	Tablet	Twice daily	\$4,591
upadacitinib (Rinvoq)	Under Review for AS	Tablet	Once daily	\$19,734
Conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)				

Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication^c

generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator	PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost of Therapy
methotrexate (generics)	Regular Benefit, Subject to LCA	Tablet	Once per week until adequate response is achieved.	\$56 to \$343
	Regular Benefit, Subject to LCA	Vial		\$197
leflunomide (generics)	Regular Benefit, subject to LCA	Tablet	Once daily	First year: \$1,076 Subsequent: \$1,042
sulfasalazine (generics)	Regular Benefit, subject to LCA	Tablet	Once daily	First year: \$410 Subsequent: \$422
	Regular Benefit, subject to LCA	EC Tablet		First year: \$624 Subsequent year: \$642
hydroxychloroquine (generics)	Regular Benefit, subject to LCA	Tablet	Once daily	First year: \$67 to \$139 Subsequent: \$62 to \$124

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 [Canada's Drug and Health Technology Agency \(CADTH\)](#)
- 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

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.