

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)	guselkumab
Brand name	Tremfya®
Manufacturer	Janssen Inc.
Indication	Psoriatic arthritis
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 guselkumab (Tremfya), you can Search the CDR Reports .
Public input start date	Wednesday, August 31, 2022
Public input closing date	Wednesday, September 28, 2022, AT MIDNIGHT
How is the drug taken?	Guselkumab is injected subcutaneously (under the skin).
How often is the drug injected?	Guselkumab is injected once at weeks 0 and 4 and then once every 8 weeks thereafter.

Information about the drug	
General drug and/or drug study information	<p>Guselkumab is used to treat psoriatic arthritis. Psoriatic arthritis is a type of arthritis that affects some people who have psoriasis, a condition that causes red, scaly patches of skin. Symptoms of psoriatic arthritis include mild to severe joint pain, stiffness, and swelling. It can occur in any part of the body. Psoriatic arthritis is a chronic condition that can get worse over time. This disease usually has both flare-ups and periods of remission.</p> <p>Guselkumab is a monoclonal antibody. Monoclonal antibodies are proteins that recognize and bind specifically to certain proteins in the body. This medicine works by neutralizing the activity of a protein called IL-23, which is present at increased levels in diseases such as psoriatic arthritis.</p> <p>Studies looked at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and efficacy of guselkumab compared to placebo. • Proportion of patients who achieved an American College of Rheumatology 20% improvement (ACR 20) at week 24 • Change from baseline to week 24 in Disability Index of the Health Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ-DI) score • Change from baseline to week 24 in 36-Item Short-form Health Survey Physical Component Summary (SF-36 PCS) • Investigator’s Global Assessment of Psoriasis (IGA) response at week 24 • Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) • Bad reactions • Serious bad reactions • Patients leaving the trial due to bad reactions • Bad reactions of special interest: For example, serious infections, hypersensitivity reactions, elevated liver enzymes, or liver disorders, and injection site reactions.
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)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost of Therapy ^a
Guselkumab (Tremfya)	Under Review	Prefilled syringe or patient-controlled injector	Once at weeks 0 and 4 then every 8 weeks thereafter	First year: \$22,489 ^b Subsequent: \$20,882
Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) Inhibitors				
Adalimumab (Amgevita, Hadlima, Hulio, Hyrimoz, Idacio)	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	First year: \$20,234 Subsequent: \$18,141
Etanercept (Erelzi, Brenzys)	Limited Coverage	Vial Pre-filled syringe or auto-injector	Weekly, either as a single injection, two injections on the same day, or 2 injections, 3 or 4 days apart.	\$13,535
Golimumab SC (Simponi)	Limited Coverage	Pre-filled syringe or Auto-injector	Once monthly	\$20,007
Infliximab (Inflectra)	Limited Coverage	Vial	5 mg/kg initial dose followed with additional similar doses at 2 and 6 weeks after the first infusion, then every 8 weeks thereafter	First year: \$22,050 Subsequent: \$17,915
Infliximab (Renflexis, Avsola)				First year: \$20,706 Subsequent: \$16,824
IL-17A Inhibitors				
Secukinumab (Cosentyx)	Limited Coverage	Pre-filled syringe, pen, or vial	Once at weeks 0,1,2,3, and 4 followed by monthly thereafter	First year: \$13,230 to \$26,460 Subsequent: \$10,584 to \$21,168

^a All prices as per PharmaCare formulary unless otherwise specified. Weight-based dosing assumes a weight of 85 kg.

^b Price as per CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for guselkumab plus 5% markup.

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)	Dosage Form	Usual Dose	Cost of Therapy ^a
Ixekizumab (Taltz)	Limited Coverage	Prefilled syringe or pen	Once at week 0, followed by every 4 weeks, or once at week 0, followed by once at weeks 2,4,6,8,10, and 12, then every 4 weeks thereafter.	First year: \$24,556 to \$29,817 Subsequent: \$22,802
IL-12/23 Inhibitor				
Ustekinumab (Stelera)	Limited Coverage for the treatment of moderate to severe psoriasis	Pre-filled syringe or vial	Once at weeks 0 and 4, then every 12 weeks thereafter	First year: \$24,114 Subsequent: \$20,899
Janus kinase inhibitor				
Upadacitinib (Rinvoq)	Under Review	Tablet	Once daily	\$19,189 ^c
Phosphodiesterase-4 inhibitor				
Apremilast (Otezla)	Non-Benefit	Tablet	Twice daily, following titration	13,809 ^d
Conventional Synthetic Disease-Modifying Antirheumatic Drugs (DMARDs)				
Methotrexate (generics)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Once per week until response achieved.	\$85 to \$360
	Regular Benefit subject to LCA	Vial for Injection	Once per week until response achieved.	\$197
Leflunomide (generics)	Regular Benefit subject to LCA	Tablet	Loading dose: Once daily for 3 days Maintenance: Once daily	First year: \$814 Subsequent: \$788
Sulfasalazine (generics)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Once per day	First year: \$409 Subsequent: \$422
		Enteric coated (EC) tablet		First year: \$624 Subsequent: \$642

^c Manufacturer's submitted price plus 8% markup.

^d Price as per CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for guselkumab injection (Tremfya).

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 the [Common Drug Review \(CDR\)](#)
- 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.