

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)	semaglutide
Brand name	Wegovy™
Manufacturer	Novo Nordisk Canada Inc.
Indication	Weight management
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 semaglutide (Wegovy), you can Search the CDR Reports .
Public input start date	Wednesday, June 29, 2022
Public input closing date	Wednesday, July 27, 2022, AT MIDNIGHT
How is the drug taken?	Semaglutide is injected under the skin (subcutaneously).
How often is the drug injected?	Semaglutide is injected once weekly.

Information about the drug	
General drug and/or drug study information	<p>Semaglutide is used for chronic weight management in addition to a reduced calorie diet and increased physical activity in adults, who have: a body mass index (BMI^a) of 30 kg/m² or greater (with obesity), or a BMI^a of 27 kg/m² and less than 30 kg/m² (overweight) and weight-related health problems. Weight management is the process of adopting long-term lifestyle changes to maintain a healthy body weight.</p> <p>Semaglutide is similar to a natural hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) that is released from the intestine after a meal. Semaglutide works by causing you to feel full and less hungry.</p> <p>Studies looked at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes from baseline in body weight • Changes from baseline in body mass index (BMI) • Health-related quality of life • Normalization of glucose parameters • Bad reactions • Serious bad reactions • Patients leaving the trial due to bad reactions • Bad reactions of special interest: For example, gastrointestinal (GI) adverse events, low blood sugar (hypoglycemia, including severe hypoglycemia), injection site reactions, life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), cancer of the thyroid, gall bladder disease, headaches, and psychiatric effects.
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](#).

^a BMI (Body Mass Index) is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. See your doctor to have your BMI measured.

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	Annual Cost of Therapy^b
Semaglutide (Wegovy)	Under Review	Pre-filled pen for injection	Once per week	\$4,726
<i>Pharmaceutical comparators</i>				
Liraglutide (Saxenda)	Non-Benefit	Pre-filled pen	Once daily	First year: \$4,653 Subsequent years: \$4,726
Naltrexone hydrochloride / bupropion (Contrave)	Non-Benefit	Tablet	Week 1: one tablet per day Week 2: two tablets per day Week 3: three tablets per day Week 4+: Two tablets twice daily	First year: \$3,166 Subsequent years: \$3,260
Orlistat (Xenical)	Non-Benefit	Capsule	Three times daily with meals	\$1,815

^b All prices as per CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review report for semaglutide (Wegovy).

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.