

# 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)	<b>upadacitinib</b>
Brand name	<b>Rinvoq®</b>
Manufacturer	AbbVie
Indication	Ulcerative colitis (UC)
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 upadacitinib (Rinvoq), you can <a href="#">Search the CDR Reports</a> .
Public input start date	Wednesday, August 31, 2022
Public input closing date	<b>Wednesday, September 28, 2022, AT MIDNIGHT</b>
How is the drug taken?	Upadacitinib is taken orally (by mouth).
How often is the drug taken?	Upadacitinib is taken once daily.

<b>Information about the drug</b>	
General drug and/or drug study information	<p>Upadacitinib is being reviewed for the treatment of ulcerative colitis (UC) in people who have had an inadequate response, loss of response to, or were intolerant to either conventional therapy or a biologic agent. UC is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that involves the inflammation of the intestinal mucosa (the membrane lining the intestines) and the colon. People with UC may experience bloody diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain, weight loss, fatigue, and loss of appetite.</p> <p>Upadacitinib is a 'Janus kinase' (JAK) inhibitor. JAK is an enzyme in the body which normally helps to turn on the immune system when it is needed. The immune system then causes swelling and tenderness, which is called inflammation. Upadacitinib works by attaching to the JAK enzyme to lower its activity.</p> <p>Studies looked at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and efficacy of upadacitinib compared to placebo</li> <li>• Proportion of patients achieving or maintaining clinical remission including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clinical remission per adapted Mayo score at week 8 and week 52</li> <li>○ Clinical response per adapted Mayo score at week 8 and week 52</li> <li>○ Endoscopic<sup>a</sup> remission at week 8 and week 52</li> <li>○ Histologic<sup>b</sup> improvement at week 8 and week 52</li> <li>○ Mucosal healing at week 8 and week 52</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bad reactions</li> <li>• Serious bad reactions</li> <li>• Patients leaving the trial due to bad reactions</li> <li>• Bad reactions of special interest: For example, serious infections, opportunistic infections, low white blood cell count, liver disease, anemia, gastrointestinal perforations, and venous blood clots.</li> </ul>
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](#).

<sup>a</sup> An endoscopy is a procedure used in medicine to look inside the body.

<sup>b</sup> Histology is the study of tissues and cells under a microscope.

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 per Year or Course of Therapy <sup>a</sup>
Upadacitinib (Rinvoq)	Under Review	Tablet	Once daily	Low dose maintenance Year 1: \$21,904 <sup>b</sup> Thereafter: \$18,863
				High dose maintenance Year 1: \$29,918 Thereafter: \$28,361
<b>Comparators - Biologics</b>				
Adalimumab (Amgevita, Hadlima, Hulio, Hyrimoz, Idacio)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Pre-filled syringe or auto-injector for SC injection	Once every two weeks	Year 1: \$14,845 Thereafter: \$12,866
Golimumab (Simponi)	Non-benefit for UC <a href="#">Limited Coverage for the treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis, and Ankylosing Spondylitis</a>	Prefilled syringe or auto-injector for SC injection	Once at week 0, once at week 2, then every 4 weeks thereafter	Year 1: \$25,008 Thereafter: \$21,674
Infliximab (Inflectra, Avsola, Renflexis)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Vial for IV infusion	Once at weeks 0, 2, and 6, then every 8 weeks thereafter	Year 1: \$16,565 to \$17,640 Thereafter: \$13,459 to \$14,333

<sup>a</sup> All prices as per PharmaCare Formulary unless otherwise specified. All weight-based dosing assumes a weight of 70 kg.

<sup>b</sup> Price as per CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for upadacitinib UC plus 5% markup.

**Glossary: Enteric-coated:** An enteric-coated tablet is one that is designed to temporarily withstand attack by stomach acid, so that it does not dissolve in the stomach but allows release of the medication in the intestine, **IV:** Intravenous, taking place within, or administered into, a vein or veins, **SC:** subcutaneous, under the skin.

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 per Year or Course of Therapy <sup>a</sup>
Ozanimod (Zeposia)	Under Review	Capsule	Once daily	Year 1: \$26,250 <sup>a</sup> Thereafter: \$26,250
Tofacitinib (Xeljanz)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Tablet	Twice daily	Year 1: \$20,527 Thereafter: \$18,364
Ustekinumab (Stelara)	Non-benefit for UC <a href="#">Limited Coverage for the treatment of severe psoriasis (SC)</a>	Vial for IV infusion and Pre-filled Syringe for SC injection	IV at week 0, then one SC injection every 8 weeks thereafter	Year 1: \$37,256 <sup>b</sup> Thereafter: \$31,348
Vedolizumab (Entyvio) (IV)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Vial for IV infusion	Once at weeks 0, 2, and 6, then every 8 weeks thereafter	Year 1: \$27,636 Thereafter: \$22,454
Vedolizumab (Entyvio) (SC)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Pre-filled syringe or pen for SC injection	Following IV infusions at weeks 0 and 2, SC injection is administered every 2 weeks as maintenance only (from week 4 onwards)	Year 1: \$29,116 Thereafter: \$21,385
<b>Comparators - Aminosalicylates</b>				
5-ASA (Asacol 800, generic)	Regular Benefit, <a href="#">Asacol is subject to low cost alternative (LCA) pricing</a>	Tablet	Tablets taken daily in divided doses	\$386 to \$1,791
5-ASA (Mesasal)	Regular Benefit	Enteric Coated Tablet	Tablets taken daily in divided doses	\$776 to \$1,551

<sup>a</sup> Price as per CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for upadacitinib UC plus 5% markup.

<sup>b</sup> Price for Stelara vial for IV infusion taken from CDR Pharmacoeconomic Review Report for upadacitinib for UC. Price for pre-filled syringe taken from B.C. PharmaCare Formulary.

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 per Year or Course of Therapy <sup>a</sup>
5-ASA (Mezavant)	Regular Benefit	Delayed Extended Release Tablet	Once daily	\$1,404 to \$2,807
5-ASA (Pentasa)	Regular Benefit	Extended Release Tablet	Four times daily	\$1031 to \$2,036
	Regular Benefit	Suppository	Once daily	\$956
	Regular Benefit	Enema	Once daily	\$2,296 to \$2,891
5-ASA (Salofalk)	Regular Benefit	Delayed Release Tablet	Daily in divided doses	\$794 to \$2117
	Regular Benefit	Suppository	Daily	\$956 to \$1,607
	Regular Benefit	Enema	Active: Nightly Maint: Nightly or every other night	\$1,729 to \$3,458
Olsalazine (Dipentum)	Regular Benefit	Capsule	Daily in divided doses	Year 1: \$1,053 to \$3,158 Thereafter: \$1,053
Sulfasalazine (Salazopyrin, generics)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Active: Three to four times daily Maintenance: Two to three times daily	Year 1: \$633 to \$1689 Thereafter: \$422 to \$633
<b>Comparators - Corticosteroids</b>				
Betamethasone enema (Betnesol)	Regular Benefit	Enema	Once nightly for 4 weeks	\$433
Budesonide (Entocort)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage for the treatment of Crohn's disease</a>	Capsule	Three times per day up to 8 weeks, followed by daily for up to 3 months	\$732
Budesonide (Entocort Enema)	<a href="#">Limited Coverage</a>	Enema	Nightly for 4 to 8 weeks	\$318 to \$635

<b>Cost of the drug under review compared to other drugs used to treat the same indication</b>				
<b>generic name (Brand Name) of Drug Comparator</b>	<b>PharmaCare Status (if and how the drug is already covered)</b>	<b>Dosage Form</b>	<b>Usual Dose</b>	<b>Cost per Year or Course of Therapy<sup>a</sup></b>
Hydrocortisone enema (Cortenema)	Regular Benefit	Enema	Nightly for 14 to 21 days	\$129 to \$194
Hydrocortisone enema (Cortifoam)	Regular Benefit	Rectal Aerosol	One to two doses daily for two to three weeks, and every second day thereafter	\$1,641 to \$3,343
Hydrocortisone (Solu-cortef)	Regular Benefit	Vial	Once daily to induce remission; then switch to other agent	\$1,754 to \$6,136
Prednisone (generic)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Daily, to induce remission; then lower dose	\$100 to \$126, or lower
<b>Comparators - Immunomodulators</b>				
Azathioprine (generic)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Once daily	\$332
Mercaptopurine (generic)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Once daily	\$2,237 to \$3,915
Methotrexate (generic)	Regular Benefit	Tablet	Once weekly	\$152 to \$360

### 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.