



# National Pharmacare in PEI

## Questions and Answers for Health Care Providers

May 2025

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In partnership with the Government of Canada, the National Pharmacare Program provides coverage for many diabetes medications and contraceptives and expands access to blood glucose test strips as of May 1, 2025.

#### Who is eligible?

PEI residents are eligible for the program if they:

- are a PEI resident as defined by the *Drug Cost Assistance Act*; and
- have a valid PEI Health Card; and
- their medication is included in the list of drugs covered by the National Pharmacare Program.

Individuals enrolled in a federal drug benefit plan (i.e. Non-Insured Health Benefit Plan, the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, Correction Service Canada or Interim Federal Health Program) will continue to receive coverage from these existing plans.

People who do not have an active PEI health card (such as those with tourist visas or international students not eligible for an off-campus work permit) will not be able to access coverage for diabetes medications and contraceptives under the National Pharmacare Program.

#### What is the cost for medications?

Medications included in the National Pharmacare Program will be available at no cost, except for blood glucose test strips (see below for costing of blood glucose test strips). Some medications in the National Pharmacare Program are approved on a special authorization basis only.

#### For a PEI resident with private insurance, how will coverage be affected with the National Pharmacare Program?

The costs of contraceptives and diabetes medications included in the National Pharmacare Program will be paid for publicly. This means PEI residents with private health insurance won't need to coordinate benefits for covered products with their private insurance plans (exception: blood glucose test strips, see Diabetes section below for more details).

#### What if the drug my patient needs is not covered in the National Pharmacare Program?

If the prescribed medication is not included in the National Pharmacare Program list of drugs, it will not be eligible for coverage through the National Pharmacare Program.

Diabetes medications and contraceptives that are not included in the National Pharmacare Program drug list but are currently included in the PEI Pharmacare Formulary, will continue to be available through [PEI Pharmacare Drug Programs](#).

#### Will there be any changes to the special authorization criteria or process?

Some medications that previously required a special authorization will now be open benefit. For medications that still require special authorization, the criteria and submission process remains unchanged. Certain insulins still require special authorization, but their criteria for coverage remains the same. All contraceptives

under the National Pharmacare Program are open benefit and do not require special authorization.

**How will drugs, covered under the National Pharmacare Program, be shown in the Formulary?**

Drugs covered in the National Pharmacare Program will have the word “**National**” identified within their program listing in the PEI Pharmacare Formulary.

**Can patients who are travelling get a travel supply?**

Yes, patients are eligible to receive up to a 180-day travel supply of medications covered under the National Pharmacare Program. Medications for a travel supply must be filled in a PEI community pharmacy prior to your patient’s travel. Patients will be required to provide their community pharmacy advanced notice of their travel dates and complete the [out of province travel declaration.pdf](#)

**For a PEI resident who has a PEI health card, will they be able to get coverage from the National Pharmacare Program if they are not in PEI?**

Medications will not be eligible for coverage if they are filled at an out-of-province pharmacy.

If a patient takes up residency elsewhere, their eligibility for this program will end the day they leave PEI. If they re-locate to another Canadian province which has a National Pharmacare Program, they must meet the eligibility criteria for that province.

PEI residents who attend school at an out-of-province educational facility (i.e. university / college etc.) would need to have their prescriptions filled by a PEI community-based pharmacy to receive the benefits under the National Pharmacare Program agreement with PEI.

**Where can I find out more information about the National Pharmacare Program?**

Visit our [website](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/NationalPharmacareProgram) - <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/NationalPharmacareProgram>.

## CONTRACEPTION

**What types of contraceptives are covered under the National Pharmacare Program?**

See **Appendix A** for the list of contraceptives covered by the National Pharmacare Program. The program covers most oral contraceptives, hormonal IUDs, copper IUDs, contraceptive implants, contraceptive injections, vaginal rings, and emergency contraceptives.

**Are generic and brand name contraceptives covered under the program?**

The full cost of generic contraceptives listed in **Appendix A** is covered under the program. If a person chooses to access a brand name medication where there is a generic product available, they will be responsible for paying the difference in cost between the brand name medication and price paid by the government for the least expensive generic medication.

**Are there any specific guidelines for prescribing contraceptives under the National Pharmacare Program?**

No, there are no specific guidelines for prescribing contraceptives under the National Pharmacare Program.

**Is a prescription needed for contraceptives?**

Yes, contraceptives like oral contraceptives, IUDs (i.e. hormonal and copper), contraceptive implants, contraceptive injections, vaginal rings, and emergency contraceptives require a prescription.

**Where can patients go to access contraceptives if they do not have a primary care provider?**

People without a primary care provider can get prescriptions for contraceptives from:

- Walk-in clinics;

- Virtual care (Maple);
- Health clinics at post-secondary education campuses (for students and staff);
- Pharmacies (except for IUDs and contraceptive implants); and
- Sexual Health, Options & Reproductive Services (SHORS).

Once the patient has a prescription, they can go to a pharmacy to get the contraceptive. If the patient is prescribed an IUD or implant, a follow-up appointment is required with a health care provider to insert it.

## DIABETES

### What types of diabetes medications are covered under the National Pharmacare Program?

See **Appendix B** for the list of diabetes medications that are covered by the National Pharmacare Program. Some medications, as indicated, require Special Authorization, using the existing [Pharmacare Special Authorization Form](#). The National Pharmacare Program also expands access to blood glucose test strips.

### Are generic and brand name diabetes medications covered under the program?

The full cost of generic diabetes medications listed in **Appendix B** is covered under the program. If a person chooses to access a brand name medication where there is a generic product available, they will be responsible for paying the difference in cost between the brand name medication and price paid by the government for the least expensive generic medication.

### Will insulin pen needles be covered?

The National Pharmacare Program in Prince Edward Island does **not** cover the cost of insulin syringes or insulin pen needles.

### Are blood glucose test strips covered?

As part of the National Pharmacare Program, Island residents taking non-insulin diabetes medications for diabetes can now receive coverage for blood glucose test strips.

To qualify for coverage of blood glucose test strips, your patient must be enrolled in the PEI Pharmacare [Diabetes Drug Program](#).

Under the current co-pay schedule for the Diabetes Drug Program, patients will pay the following:

- \$11.00 per dispense for 100 blood glucose test strips
  - If they are taking insulin, they can access 100 test strips every 25 days;
  - If they are taking a non-insulin diabetes medication that has a lower risk of causing hypoglycemia (low-blood sugar), they can access a maximum of 200 strips annually;
  - If they are taking a non-insulin diabetes medication that has a higher risk of causing hypoglycemia (low blood sugars) (i.e. a sulfonylurea (glyburide, gliclazide, glimepiride) or repaglinide), they can access a maximum of 300 strips annually.

Please see the [Diabetes Drug Program](#) information page for additional details about this program. Private health insurance, where applicable, will reduce the co-pay for test strips (see next question).

### Do patients need a prescription for test strips?

PEI residents must be enrolled in the PEI Pharmacare Diabetes Drug Program to receive test strips coverage. They do not need a prescription to receive blood glucose test strips, for the \$11 co-pay; however, if they have private health insurance, a prescription may be required to submit to their insurance provider, thereby reducing the patient's co-pay to \$2.20 or less (depending on the health insurance plan).

**Can patients get a 90-day supply of test strips?**

PEI residents will not be eligible to receive a 90-day supply for glucose test strips, insulin or any drug approved through Special Authorization. These products are limited to a 30-day supply at a time.

Other diabetes medication can be dispensed as a 90-day supply.

**Does the National Pharmacare Program change the criteria or coverage for the Insulin Pump Program or the Glucose Sensor Program?**

No, the criteria and coverage under the PEI Insulin Pump Program and the Glucose Sensor Program remain unchanged under the National Pharmacare Program, ensuring continued support for those who rely on these essential services.

**Do I have to continue to register my patient in the PEI Pharmacare's Diabetes Drug Program?**

You will need to continue to register your patient in the Diabetes Drug Program for coverage of glucose test strips as well as any medications that are currently covered under the PEI Pharmacare Formulary but not included in the National Pharmacare Program. A physician, nurse practitioner or other health care provider must complete the [Diabetes Drug Program - Patient Registration Form](#) .

## APPENDIX A – CONTRACEPTIVES COVERED IN NATIONAL PHARMACARE

If a person chooses to access a brand name medication where there is a generic product available, they will be responsible for paying the difference in cost between the brand name medication and price paid by the government for the least expensive generic medication.

Drug/related product categories (active ingredient)	Conditions of coverage (Open benefit unless otherwise specified)
Levonorgestrel and ethinylestradiol ( <i>Alesse</i> , <i>Min-Ovral</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Alesse</i> or <i>Min-Ovral</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed levonorgestrel and ethinylestradiol products are available at zero cost.
Desogestrel and ethinylestradiol ( <i>Marvelon</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Marvelon</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed desogestrel and ethinylestradiol products are available at zero cost.
Drospirenone and ethinylestradiol ( <i>Yasmin</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Yasmin</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed drospirenone and ethinylestradiol products are available at zero cost.
Norethisterone and ethinylestradiol	
Levonorgestrel and ethinylestradiol	
Norethisterone and ethinylestradiol	
Norgestimate and ethinylestradiol	
Norethisterone	
Medroxyprogesterone ( <i>Depo-Provera</i> )	
Etonogestrel	
Levonorgestrel ( <i>Plan B</i> and generic)	If requesting brand name <i>Plan B</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed levonorgestrel products are available at zero cost.
Plastic IUD with copper	
Plastic IUD with progestogen	
Vaginal ring with progestogen and estrogen ( <i>NuvaRing</i> and generic)	If requesting brand name <i>NuvaRing</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed vaginal rings with progestogen and estrogen products are available at zero cost.

## APPENDIX B – DIABETES MEDICATIONS COVERED IN NATIONAL PHARMACARE

If a person chooses to access a brand name medication where there is a generic product available, they will be responsible for paying the difference in cost between the brand name medication and price paid by the government for the least expensive generic medication.

Drug/related product categories (active ingredient)	Conditions of coverage (Open benefit unless otherwise specified)
Fast-acting insulin ( <i>Humulin-R, Novolin GE Toronto, Entuzity</i> )	Special authorization access For <i>Entuzity</i>
Rapid-acting insulin lispro ( <i>Admelog</i> )	
Rapid-acting insulin aspart ( <i>Kirsty, Trurapi</i> )	
Rapid-acting insulin glulisine ( <i>Apidra</i> )	
Intermediate-acting insulin ( <i>Humulin-N, Novolin GE NPH</i> )	
Intermediate combined with fast-acting insulin ( <i>Humulin 30/70, Novolin GE 30/70, Humalog Mix 25</i> )	
Intermediate combined with rapid-acting insulin ( <i>Humalog Mix 25</i> )	
Long-acting basal insulin glargine ( <i>Basaglar, Semglee, Toujeo solostar, Toujeo doublestar</i> )	<a href="#">Special authorization access</a> for <i>Toujeo SoloSTAR</i> and <i>Toujeo DoubleSTAR</i>
Long-acting basal insulin detemir ( <i>Levemir</i> )	<a href="#">Special authorization access</a>
Long-acting basal insulin degludec ( <i>Tresiba</i> )	
Metformin ( <i>Glucophage</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Glucophage</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed metformin products are available at zero cost.
Glyburide	
Gliclazide ( <i>Diamicron MR</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Diamicron MR</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed gliclazide products are available at zero cost.
Saxagliptin and metformin ( <i>Komboglyze</i> )	
Empagliflozin and metformin ( <i>Synjardy</i> )	
Linagliptin and metformin ( <i>Jentadueto</i> )	
Dapagliflozin ( <i>Forxiga</i> and generics)	If requesting brand name <i>Forxiga</i> , residents may be responsible for a portion of the cost; other listed dapagliflozin products are available at zero cost.