

Filgrastim/Pegfilgrastim (GCSF) Coverage

Filgrastim/Pegfilgrastim (GCSF) are not on the BC Cancer Benefit Drug List. Are they covered by BC Cancer?

BC Cancer does not cover filgrastim and pegfilgrastim for **outpatients**, but covers the cost of filgrastim for oncology **inpatients**, for approved indications only.

Filgrastim and pegfilgrastim are granulocyte colony stimulating factors (GCSF) used to decrease the duration of neutropenia associated with cancer chemotherapy. They are supportive care medications as they are not used for the **active** treatment of cancer.

Inpatients

BC Cancer aligns coverage for filgrastim with the BC PharmaCare [Special Authority \(SA\) Program](#). The indications for coverage are outlined in the [Filgrastim Special Authority Request Form](#).

PharmaCare currently covers the GRASTOFIL® and NIVESTYM® brands of filgrastim, which are biosimilar formulations to NEUPOGEN®. Pegfilgrastim, a long acting pegylated form of filgrastim, is not currently covered by the BC PharmaCare SA Program and its cost is not reimbursed by BC Cancer.

If filgrastim is being used for one of the eligible indications, it may be dispensed and the cost billed via OSCAR to BC Cancer. The indication for filgrastim is filled in at the time of OSCAR billing. For indications not listed, the filgrastim may be dispensed at the discretion of the hospital, but the cost will not be reimbursed by BC Cancer.

Outpatients

Outpatients are responsible for the cost of the drugs, which are filled at a community pharmacy. Outpatient coverage is through the BC PharmaCare benefit plans and [Special Authority \(SA\) program](#). Third party coverage may also be available.

BC PharmaCare funding information is as described in the inpatient section above, and the information is found on the [Limited Coverage Drug](#) web page for [filgrastim](#).

If filgrastim is being used for an eligible indication, the patient's cost will contribute toward paying down their PharmaCare deductible as calculated by their income through the [Fair PharmaCare plan](#). In addition to PharmaCare coverage, the patient may be eligible for third party coverage as described below. Ensure the following steps are taken to optimize PharmaCare coverage:

1) Patient is registered with Fair PharmaCare and understands their level of coverage

The [Fair PharmaCare plan](#) web page provides information which includes: registering online, ensuring eligibility (MSP coverage is required), checking enrollment, updating income and requesting the monthly deductible payment option.

The patient will pay 100% of the cost of the prescription until they reach their family deductible as set by Fair PharmaCare, based on family income. After reaching the deductible, PharmaCare will pay for 70% of the costs (75% for certain age groups) until the family maximum has been reached, and then 100% of costs thereafter.

Note: the Fair PharmaCare deductible is based on income from **two years prior**, not medication cost, and is assessed annually. If family income has dropped by 10% or more during the past two years, patients can request a [Fair PharmaCare Income Review](#) to have their deductible lowered. This option is particularly important when new, high cost medications are prescribed prior to the next income review date.

Another option to help alleviate immediate costs is the monthly deductible payment option for those patients who do not have private health insurance with a drug benefit plan. The web page [Get help paying your Fair PharmaCare deductible](#) outlines how to apply for both of these services.

For more information on a patient's deductible, Health Insurance BC can be contacted at 1-800-663-7100 or 604-683-7151.

2) Special Authority (SA) form has been completed and approved

Complete the [Filgrastim Special Authority Request Form](#) and fax to PharmaCare. Electronic SA forms ([eForms](#)) are available and their use is encouraged.

There are many benefits to electronic form submissions including shorter approval time, confirmation that request has been received and patient access to requests through Health Gateway. Pharmacists are able to request SA Coverage electronically when working in a clinical setting in collaboration with a prescriber. BC Cancer clinicians and pharmacists can email eFormsEnrolment@phsa.ca for authorization to access the [eForms](#).

The number for the Health Insurance of BC Pharmacy and Doctor PharmaCare/ PharmaNet Help Desk is 1-800-554-0225.

3) Third Party Coverage has been investigated

Third party coverage for filgrastim and pegfilgrastim can be accessed through the patient's individual Extended Health Benefits (EHB) and through a Manufacturer Patient Assistance Program (MPAP). Despite PharmaCare coverage not being available for pegfilgrastim, third party coverage is currently available for a number of brands of this drug.

Third party information is found in the Systemic Therapy - [Reimbursement and Forms](#) section of the BC Cancer website under [Manufacturer Patient Assistance Programs \(MPAP\)](#). Clinicians and other health care professionals can register the patient in a program, which will investigate coverage options on behalf of the patient. The Pharmacy Drug Access Navigator (DAN) office at one of the regional [BC Cancer Centres](#) is a resource that is available to enroll patients in a MPAP and to advise patients and health care professionals in this process.

Ideally, these programs should be contacted **before** a prescription is filled. Some of these programs may not provide retroactive reimbursement.

References:

1. Government of British Columbia [Internet]. Victoria BC: Government of British Columbia; 2022. Special Authority; [updated 2023 Mar 16;cited 2023 May 30]; Available from: <https://alpha.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/pharmacare/prescribers/special-authority>
2. Government of British Columbia [Internet]. Victoria BC: Government of British Columbia; 2022. Fair PharmaCare Plan; [updated 2023 May 19;cited 2023 May 30]. Available from: <https://alpha.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/who-we-cover/fair-pharmacare-plan?keyword=fair&keyword=pharmacare>
3. BC Cancer. Manufacturer Patient Assistance Programs [Internet]. Vancouver BC: BC Cancer [updated 2023 Apr 14;cited 2023 May 30]. Available from: <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/systemic-therapy-site/Documents/Policy%20and%20Forms/Patient%20assistance%20programs.pdf>