

August 2020 NIHB UPDATE



Pharmacy benefit information

New pharmacy benefit listings

- NIHB now covers 3 Voltaren Emulgel products for treatment of back, muscle or joint pain. Eligible products listed in the [NIHB drug benefit list](#) are covered without prior approval, up to 100 grams per month
- NIHB recently listed triamcinolone hexacetonide, a steroid used to reduce swelling caused by a variety of health conditions including allergies, asthma or rheumatoid arthritis
 - The program now covers both injectable forms of the medication, triamcinolone hexacetonide and triamcinolone acetonide, as open benefits

Coverage of non-prescription pharmacy benefits recommended by pharmacists

- NIHB now accepts a pharmacist's recommendation for coverage of any eligible non-prescription 'over-the-counter' pharmacy benefit
- To be eligible for coverage, the item must be listed on the [NIHB drug benefit list](#) and within the pharmacist's scope of practice to recommend or prescribe
- Previously, NIHB had a selected list of non-prescription items that could be recommended by a pharmacist. That list is no longer in effect, and is replaced by this new policy

New dose limit for gabapentin

- For client safety, NIHB has changed the dose limit for coverage of gabapentin to 3600 milligrams per day, to a maximum of 30 days
- Pharmacists should call the [Drug Exception Centre](#) if a client reaches the dose limit

Medical supplies and equipment information

New coverage for oral digital thermometers

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, oral digital thermometers are listed as an open benefit with a price limit of \$25 and a replacement guideline of 1 per 5 years

- Thermometers are covered with a prescription from a physician or a nurse practitioner, or a written recommendation from a registered nurse or a pharmacist

Reminder: coverage of electric breast pumps

- Electric breast pumps are a limited use benefit and prior approval is required for coverage. Criteria for coverage can be found in the [MS&E guide and benefit lists](#)
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, electric breast pumps may be covered for purchase (instead of rental), once every 3 years at a maximum price of \$275.00

Increased coverage for some communication and respiratory benefits

- NIHB recently changed frequency guidelines for selected voice restoration products and supplies. Prior approval is required and the new frequency guidelines are:
 - puncture dilator: 1 per year
 - gel cap insertion system: 1 per year
 - plug insert: 2 per year
 - flushing device: 1 box per year
 - cleaning brush: 2 boxes per year
 - gel cap: 1 box per year
- The replacement guideline for inlet filters has increased to 14 filters per year
 - Inlet filters are used with home positive airway pressure (PAP) devices and are covered as open benefits