

INSULIN PUMP THERAPY #2: YOU'VE DECIDED ON A PUMP — NOW WHAT?

Starting on an insulin pump can be an exciting and very big decision. It requires a lot of time and patience. You and your family have discussed all the benefits and challenges of pump therapy and have decided that this is the route you would like to pursue. So what do you need to do to get the process started?

For first-time pumpers:

- Discuss with your child's endocrinologist and healthcare team. This is a decision that must be made with the support of your diabetes team.
- Read through our handouts "Pump Overview", [Insulin Pump Therapy #1: The Basics](#) and review the *Are You Ready to Pump* quiz in it. You will also need to complete and return the [Pump Readiness Assessment](#) to dcnurse@cw.bc.ca
- The readiness assessment will be reviewed by your team. You **may** be asked to attend a pump Readiness Workshop.
- **Be sure that your family is registered for the BC Fair Pharmacare program!** PharmaCare has a [handout](#) explaining their funding. You may also be eligible for funding through your extended benefits. Your extended benefit company may require a "Letter of Medical Necessity" from your endocrinologist to proceed.
- Contact the insulin pump company reps to find out which pump is best suited to you and/or your child. You are encouraged to do as much research as possible to find out which pump will best suit your needs. The contact information can be found on Page 3 of our [Insulin Pump Therapy #1: The Basics](#) handout.
- Not all pumps are covered by Pharmacare. If the pump you choose is not covered, you will need to contact your extended health company to ask about coverage for insulin pumps.
- Some companies will only provide funding for 1 insulin pump in their lifetime.
- The doctor will need to know which pump you are applying for and then will fill out the [Continuous Subcutaneous Insulin Infusion \(Insulin Pump\)—PharmaCare Special Authority Request](#) form and fax off to PharmaCare.
- The process may take approximately 3 weeks for approval. This approval will be faxed back to the doctor, and we will send you a copy. This letter is required before you can order your pump. Your approval is valid for 6 months, including purchasing and teaching.
- Please contact the Diabetes Clinic Nurse (dcnurse@cw.bc.ca) to arrange an appointment for teaching. Teaching may be done with other families based on the pump brand. There may be a several-month waiting list for teaching, depending on appointment availability.
- Initial pump teaching is for approximately 3 hours. This may be spread over 2 separate days. Our experience has shown that children do best when the initial pump training is done when the family is following a regular routine.
- The entire process for initiating pump therapy usually takes several months.

For current pump users:

- PharmaCare will fund a pump only every 5 years. The criteria for funding a subsequent pump (even if PharmaCare did not fund the initial pump) are:
 - the current pump must be out of warranty
 - your child must have had **two** A1C value of 9.0% or less, one within a month of application, the other 4-6 months prior
 - your child has not had more than one episode of ketoacidosis within the past 12 months. Your doctor is required to provide proof that your child fulfills these criteria.
- We will need to arrange with your current pump company rep to send us a copy of the expired pump warranty. Once this has been received, the doctor will fill in the [Continuous Subcutaneous Insulin Infusion \(Insulin Pump\)—PharmaCare Special Authority Request](#) form and fax all the paperwork off to PharmaCare.
- Once received, we will send you a copy. **You** will need to contact the pump company directly to order the replacement pump. Some companies will only provide funding for 1 insulin pump in their lifetime.
- Approval by BC PharmaCare **does not** automatically mean that your extended-benefits provider will agree to replace the pump. Many providers will not replace a pump unless it is broken, even if the warranty has expired.
- If the pump you choose is not covered, you will need to contact your extended health company to ask about coverage for insulin pumps.

Important Tips for Success Prior to Starting:

- Know how to count carbohydrates and practice doing this well in advance of beginning the pump. Older children and teens must also know how to do this independently
- Check glucose 4-6 times per day and upload results weekly.
- Analyze glucose readings regularly and make independent insulin adjustments
- Both parent and child are interested
- Realistic expectations of what pump therapy can do and the time commitment required
- Have computer access to upload and analyze reports
- Times near school holidays and special occasions, sports tournaments, summer camp, or final exams are not the best to start pump therapy, as the child's routine is more disrupted. Time is needed to establish the correct initial pump settings.

School:

- For children who are too young to operate the pump themselves, parents will need to plan something in advance with the pre-school or daycare.
- Nursing Support Services will set up a delegated care plan for younger children while they are at school to help with giving insulin. This may take a few weeks to train support staff.
- Parents are responsible for boluses until delegated school staff are educated.
- All food choices for school need to be clearly labelled, and a parent needs to be available by phone at all times.
- It is important to remember that the child should have as few disruptions to the school schedule as possible.

Once you have received approval for a pump, then see also our handout
[Insulin Pump Therapy #3: Required Preparation for Starting on a Pump](#)