



ENDOCRINOLOGY & DIABETES PROGRAM

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Endocrinologist: _____

Nurse: _____

STARTING GROWTH HORMONE

Your child will be starting to use growth hormone in the future, and the following information is given to assist you with managing the many details associated with a new medication.

What is the name of my child's growth hormone?

_____ (DIN: _____)

BCCH Outpatient Pharmacy: 604-875-2205.

Where will I get the growth hormone?

Growth hormone is only available from the BCCH Outpatient Pharmacy. The pharmacy will dispense a three-month supply at a time and will include the supplies for mixing and administration *on your request*. When you need a refill, please call the pharmacy two or three weeks in advance to order it. For patients from outside the Lower Mainland, growth hormone can be purchased through a local pharmacy if your doctor gets [PharmaCare Special Authority](#) approval.

Can I arrange for courier delivery myself?

Yes. BCCH has used DHL Express couriers, toll-free 800-225-5345, for this service. If you arrange for this, please advise BCCH pharmacy in advance so that your growth hormone will be packed and ready.

How much does it cost? How will I pay the bill?

Most of the cost of growth hormone is covered by the provincial PharmaCare plan. However the family is responsible for the costs that are not covered by the plan. The following information describes a number of payment possibilities:

BC Fair PharmaCare Program: *Each calendar year*, the family pays a deductible for their drug costs; this is income-based and can range from 0-3% of net family income. **You must enrol your family in this program.** Information brochures are available in all pharmacies.

MSP Premium Assistance: is a program available to families with an Adjusted Net Income under \$24,000. Application is made through the [BC Medical Services Plan](#).

Extended Benefits: Many families have a "drug plan" through their employer. If you have extended benefits, you will be requesting funding from your insurance company for the PharmaCare deductible. You will be requesting approximately \$2,000 each year for growth hormone and approximately \$200 each year for supplies (needles, syringes, etc). **Please**

contact your insurance company to confirm that the above drug and required supplies are an eligible benefit. *If your insurance company requires a letter from your doctor, please contact the doctor directly. Include all relevant information: name of insurance company, contact person, FAX number, name of insured party, policy group number, plan number, ID number, and dependent number.*

The BCCH Pharmacy has the ability to process extended health claims electronically for primary coverage. Ask your insurer to allow "direct billing".

At Home Program: If your child is on the [At Home Program](#) of the [BC Ministry of Children and Family Development](#), supplies are obtained through that system. At your request, the clinic will fax the Request Form for Medical Supplies to [MCF Medical Benefits](#), which will enable you to order your supplies from the Product Distribution Centre.

Note: Occasionally growth hormone deficiency is the result of previous treatment for cancer. If this is your situation, please request further information from the clinic nurse.

What kind of medical equipment do I need to give the shots?

Most growth hormone is supplied in a powder form and needs to be mixed. Then it is given by subcutaneous injection. The supplies you will need are:

What should I do with the used needles?

Needles and syringes must be discarded in a safe manner. See our handout entitled [Safe Disposal of Needles and Other Sharps](#) for further information.

Where should I keep the growth hormone?

All growth hormone, both mixed and unmixed, should be kept refrigerated. (Note: unmixed Saizen may be stored at room temperature.) When travelling, take only the amount you need and keep it refrigerated. If you are leaving the country, request a [travel letter](#) from the clinic confirming your need for medication and needles for use at Customs.

When should I give the growth hormone?

Growth hormone is given by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection 6 or 7 times per week. Evening is the preferred time for injections, but this is flexible. Needles often distress children, but a regular routine with some power given to the child (such as choosing the spot for the injection) is optimal. The needle itself is very fine and causes little pain, so diversion with bubbles, blowing, or counting helps to manage the discomfort. An older child can do as much of the administration as s/he desires.

For any further information please contact your doctor or nurse.