

## BCCH GROWTH HORMONE THERAPY

Growth hormone has been recommended for your child. However, the cost of growth hormone for your child is only covered by the provincial drug plan, Fair PharmaCare, if the indication is "growth hormone deficiency" or "chronic renal failure". The following information will help you as you navigate funding options. The entire process takes up to 2-3 months. Regardless of whether your growth hormone covered by Fair PharmaCare or not, we recommend that all our families register with this provincial drug program.

BC Fair PharmaCare information: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/who-we-cover/fair-pharmacare-plan](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/who-we-cover/fair-pharmacare-plan)

### Starting the process:

1. All patients in BC who are potential candidates for growth hormone will be presented before the BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) Growth Hormone Advisory Committee, which is comprised of all of the community and BCCH Pediatric Endocrinologists in BC.
2. Once your child has been approved to start growth hormone, your Endocrinologist will talk to you about potential risks and benefits.
3. Once you have spoken to your Endocrinologist and are ready to move forward, one of the Endocrine Nurses will contact you. The nurse will review the product options with you, based on your child's diagnosis and needs. Once you have chosen a product, the nurse will send in an enrolment form to the growth hormone company's Patient Support Program (PSP), along with a prescription and Fair PharmaCare approval/denial. The PSP will contact you within 1-3 business days.
4. The PSP will contact your extended-benefits companies, if any, to request coverage and help navigate any necessary paperwork. They may also require validation of your income (T4's). Each of the growth hormone companies have their own assessments for co-pay (assistance with any out-of-pocket expenses). Based on your family's information, you may be asked to contribute a monthly amount.
5. If your extended-benefits company denies coverage, your Endocrinologist will re-present your child's case to the BCCH Growth Hormone Advisory Committee to explore other options for funding. For Health Canada-approved indications that are not covered by BC PharmaCare (e.g. Turner syndrome, *SHOX* deficiency, *SGA*/Russell-Silver syndrome, *ISS* or Prader-Willi syndrome), our team will work with you to identify potential sources of funding, but we cannot guarantee positive results.

**Choosing a pharmacy:**

1. Depending on which product you choose, you may be offered the option to have the product shipped to you through the company's specialty pharmacy.
2. Alternately, you may be able to get it through your local pharmacy or the BC Children's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy. The PSP can help coordinate this.

**Learn how to give growth hormone:**

1. Each of the growth hormone companies have field nurses who can arrange training with you and your family at a preferred time and location. If there are any concerns regarding training, this can be discussed with your Endocrine Nurse.
2. Finally, you will be ready to give your child their growth hormone injections.
3. Supplies such as needles, syringes, alcohol swabs and sharps containers can be obtained from your local pharmacy. The cost of supplies may be covered by extended-benefits companies or the At Home Program (if you are registered with them), but not by BC Fair PharmaCare. Speak to your Endocrine Nurse or Social Worker if there are concerns regarding costs of supplies.

**When should I give the growth hormone?**

Growth hormone is given by subcutaneous (under the skin) injection 7 days 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. Your field nurse or Endocrine Nurse can help with tips for injections.

**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 Sharps\*](#) for further information.

**Re-ordering growth hormone:**

When you have approximately 3 weeks' supply left of your growth hormone, call your pharmacy to reorder, as it can take some time for them to get the shipment in, particularly if they are a local pharmacy. Note: the growth hormone is temperature-sensitive and needs to be shipped in a cooler. If you need a new prescription, try to remember to ask at your visit. If you are running low on your supply and don't have any repeats or an appointment in clinic, a request for refill can be faxed by your pharmacy to your Endocrinologist at 604-875-3231. This may take 1-2 business days to be completed and returned.

**For any further information please contact one of the Endocrine Nurses at 604-875-3611.**