

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 this is the route you would like to pursue. So what do you need to do to get the process started?

- Discuss with your child's endocrinologist and healthcare team. This is a decision that must be made with the support of your diabetes team. If your clinic appointment is within the next 3-4 months, you can discuss at your appointment. If it is further away, you will need to leave a message to discuss this with your doctor and healthcare team.
- Read through our handout *Insulin Pump Therapy #1: The Basics* and take the *Are You Ready to Pump* quiz in it.
- 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. For school-aged children unable to give their own insulin, Nursing Support Services is usually able to set up a standard care plan for giving a bolus during school hours. 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. For the first few weeks, more frequent blood glucose checks may be needed, but this can eventually be decreased. It is important to remember that the child should have as few disruptions to the school schedule as possible.
- Know how to count carbohydrates and practice doing this well in advance of beginning the pump. If you are not already doing this, then you will need to learn. Discuss carb counting with the dietitian at your clinic appointment, or see our *Carbohydrate Counting* handout. Older children and teens must also know how to do this independently. You may also find our [numerous other carb-counting handouts](#) helpful. You can also take a look at our [online carb counting module](#).
- You need to work thorough all 18 questions on our *Carb Counting Quiz*.
- You need to understand how [BC Fair PharmaCare funding for insulin pumps](#) works; you may also be eligible for funding through your extended benefits. **Be sure that your family is registered for the BC Fair Pharmacare program!** PharmaCare has a [handout](#) explaining their funding.

For **first-time pumpers**, you must be 25 years of age or younger to apply. If you meet all the eligibility criteria, **and** after an assessment, your doctor is in agreement, then:

- The doctor will fill out the *Continuous Subcutaneous Insulin Infusion (Insulin Pump)–PharmaCare Special Authority Request* form and fax them both off to PharmaCare. The process generally takes less than a week for authorization. The 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, so keep that in mind when you are applying.

- Contact the insulin pump company reps to find out which pump is best suited to you and/or your child. The BCCH Diabetes Program is not involved in pump sales. 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.
- If you have an extended-benefits provider, the insulin pump company will contact them to arrange to complete any paperwork they may have, which may include a "Letter of Medical Necessity" from your endocrinologist, which we will fill out when requested.
- Once you have your pump, please contact Cristina (cpepe@cw.bc.ca) or Sharleen (sherrmann@cw.bc.ca) to arrange an appointment for teaching. We will need to know which pump you will be ordering, so we can schedule teaching. Teaching may be done with another child of similar age starting on the same brand pump. There may be a several-month waiting list for teaching, depending on appointment availability.
- Initial pump teaching is for approximately 3 hours, and the pump start is for another 60-90 minutes on a separate day. Our experience has shown that children do best when the initial pump training is done when the family is following a regular routine. 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.
- The entire process for initiating pump therapy usually takes several months.

If you already using a pump and are applying under PharmaCare for a **replacement** pump:

- 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: (1) the current pump will be out of warranty; (2) you must be 25 years of age or younger; (3) your child must have had **two** A1C value of 9.0%, one within a month of application, the other 4-6 months prior; and (4) your child has not had more than one episode of diabetic ketoacidosis within the past 12 months. Your doctor is required to provide proof that your child fulfils 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.
- Please note that 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.

Once you have received approval for a pump, then see also our handout

[Insulin Pump Therapy #3: Required Preparation for Starting on a Pump](#)