

## **Pharmacists Assessment and Prescribing for Birth Control – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the service being offered?**

As of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Government of New Brunswick will pay pharmacists in New Brunswick to assess and, if appropriate, prescribe medication for birth control at pharmacies. Please note that the cost of any prescribed medication or injections is not covered under the program.

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, pharmacists in NB received regulatory approval to assess and prescribe medication for birth control. Beginning June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the province will cover the cost of this service for eligible NB residents.

### **Am I eligible for this service?**

To be eligible for this service, you must:

- Be a resident of NB with a valid NB Medicare Card;
- Be between the ages of 12 and 50;
- Have a menstrual cycle and not experiencing unusual menstrual changes;
- Not be pregnant or breastfeeding or within 6 weeks post-partum;
- Not reside in a nursing home.

Before visiting the pharmacy, please contact your pharmacist to determine if you are eligible for this service.

### **Can a pharmacist assess and prescribe contraception for me if I don't have a primary care provider?**

Yes. The pharmacist can assess and, if appropriate, prescribe medication even if you do not have a primary care provider.

### **Can a pharmacist prescribe for all types of contraception?**

Pharmacists in New Brunswick can assess and prescribe self-administered hormonal contraception (oral contraceptive pills and vaginal ring) and medroxyprogesterone acetate depo injection. Pharmacists in NB are not authorized to prescribe for intrauterine devices (IUDs) or implants. If upon completion of your assessment you prefer to use a medication that the pharmacist is unable to prescribe, the pharmacist will refer you to an appropriate health care provider or service. Pharmacists can prescribe for the contraceptive patch but this is not eligible under this funded service.

### **Can a pharmacist prescribe the morning-after pill for me?**

The morning-after pill does not require a prescription and is available over the counter at most pharmacies in New Brunswick.

**Can a pharmacist prescribe the abortion pill for me?**

No. Pharmacists in NB are not authorized to assess and prescribe medication for induced abortion.

**Are there other times when pharmacists cannot provide this service?**

Pharmacists may not be able to provide this service to those with certain medical conditions. In those cases the pharmacist may refer the patient to an appropriate health care provider. Patients should contact their pharmacist for more information.

**How many times can I use this service?**

You can use this service up to three (3) times in a 365-day period. The program covers the costs for those eligible to receive one (1) initial assessment and two (2) follow-up assessments per one-year period.

**What if I need the service after I have met the maximum?**

You are eligible for three (3) services in a 365-day period. After this, you will need to see a primary care provider.

**Can I go to different pharmacies for each assessment?**

No. For follow-up assessments you will need to return to the pharmacy that completed your initial assessment.

**Does the service cover the cost of the prescribed medication?**

No. This service does not cover the cost of the dispensing fee or the cost of the prescribed medication. The cost of the medication depends on if you have a prescription drug plan and the type of drug plan you have. If you have a drug plan, the pharmacy can submit the claim for the medication for payment. You are responsible for any remaining balance.

**Does this service cover the cost of the injections when needed?**

No. This service does not cover the cost of injections. It is best to ask your pharmacy about any additional fees that may apply.

**What if I have private medical insurance that covers pharmacist services?**

If you have private medical insurance that covers the assessment, the pharmacist will submit a claim for payment for the service to your private insurance. Any remaining balance owed will be covered by the province.

**Can I take my prescription to a different pharmacy?**

Yes. You can take the prescription to another pharmacy to be filled.

**Will my primary care provider be informed?**

Yes, if appropriate. After the pharmacist assesses and prescribes a medication for birth control, they will notify your primary care provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, the pharmacist will give you a copy of the notice to keep until you have one.

**What if I have side effects from the medication?**

If new medication is prescribed, your pharmacist will schedule a follow-up appointment with you to assess how well the medication is working for you. If you have concerns before your follow-up appointment, call your pharmacist to discuss.

**Do all pharmacies in NB offer this service?**

It is best to call your pharmacy to find out.

**Do I need an appointment?**

Some pharmacies may require an appointment. It is best to call your pharmacy to find out.

**Can this service be provided by phone or video appointment?**

No. The service must be provided in person by a pharmacist.

**Where can I find out more information about this service?**

Call your pharmacist for details. Information about birth control assessment and prescribing by pharmacists can be found on the New Brunswick College of Pharmacists website: <https://nbcpc.in1touch.org/document/6900/GUIDANCE%20%20ASSESSING%20AND%20PRESCRIBING%20FOR%20CONTRACEPTION%20MANAGEMENT.pdf>