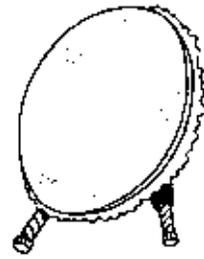


Information for Inuit Community Members

Fact Sheet HIV and Non-Insured Health Benefits



HIV AND NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS

What are Non-Insured Health Benefits?

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) is a benefits program that provides medications and other health-related goods to Inuit, First Nations and Innu. These benefits include drugs, medical transportation, dental care, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, crisis intervention and mental health counselling. This health plan is administered by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

Do Non-Insured Health Benefits cover HIV medications?

Yes. Non-Insured Health Benefits cover medications for Inuit who are HIV positive, and provinces and territories such as NWT and Quebec also cover these medications.

What HIV medications are covered?

Most antiretroviral medications necessary for treating HIV are covered by Non-Insured Health Benefits, and are given out to people who need them by prescription from their doctors. However, because new medications for HIV are coming out all the time, some may not immediately be covered. It is important to make sure than any medications prescribed to you are covered by NIHB. For a current list of HIV medications that are covered, you can the contact the NIHB website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb/nihb or call 1-888-471-1111.

What other medications are covered?

Practically all medications prescribed by your doctor will be covered by NIHB. Some vitamins and supplements, if they are prescribed, may also be covered. Non-medications that are often recommended but not prescribed for people living with HIV, such as protein "whey" powder and multivitamins, are not covered. People must pay for these items themselves. Talk to your doctor to find out what can be prescribed and what cannot in terms of supplements.

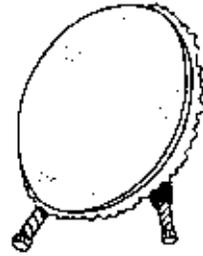
Are there HIV medications that are not covered by NIHB?

Sometimes when new HIV medications come on the market, they are not immediately covered by Non-Insurable Health Benefits. However a doctor will usually only prescribe medications that are covered.



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What If I need the medication that is not covered by NIHB?

Sometimes people find that none of the NIHB covered HIV medications are effective for them. If this happens, your doctor might try and start you on a new medication that is not yet covered by NIHB. This can be done by having you enroll in an experimental program at a hospital. However, to enroll in these experimental programs, often you must live near the city or town where this experimental program is being run. Although they are safe, these programs require a lot of time and effort because you are being tested to see how well the new drug works. When the experiment is over and the drug is approved by the government, it will most likely be added to the NIHB list of covered drugs right away and you will be able to get it at your pharmacy or from your doctor.

