



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Quitting Tobacco

Q: Can I get smoking cessation benefits from two programs at the same time?

Yes, you may receive smoking cessation benefits from both the BC Smoking Cessation Program and the Non-Insured Health Benefits* (NIHB) programs at the same time. (Please note that the BC Smoking Cessation Program is the primary coverage provider for these treatments).

You can improve your chances of quitting smoking successfully if you maximize – rather than duplicate – the benefits from both programs to access all the treatment options available on your journey to becoming smoke-free. The following are instances where you have the opportunity to maximize the benefits from both programs:

1. Combining one Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) product with another NRT product

You have a four-week (28-day) supply of nicotine patches from the pharmacy through the BC smoking cessation program. While using the patches, you observe that the patch takes a few hours before you start to feel its effects, leaving you with an initial intense craving to smoke. You decide that you need something to help you get over these initial cravings, but realize that PharmaCare can only cover one NRT product at a time.

In order to curb your initial intense craving to smoke before the patch starts working, ***you can get a supply of either the nicotine gum, lozenges or inhalers through the NIHB program.*** This helps to give you a boost before the effects of the nicotine patch start to kick in. It is important to talk to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse practitioner before using any kind of combination treatment such as combining NRTs or combining prescription drug with NRTs.

2. Switching from a prescription drug to an NRT product

You have a four-week (28-day) supply of a smoking cessation prescription drug through the BC Smoking Cessation Program and observe that you are reacting badly or unable to tolerate the drug. You decide you want to switch to an NRT product but realize that PharmaCare can only cover one treatment option at a time (either the prescription drug or NRT products unless your doctor submits a Special Authority request to PharmaCare for the switch).

Prescription smoking cessation drugs and NRTs can have side effects. It is recommended that you discuss these side effects with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse practitioner. In situations where you cannot tolerate the prescription drug, your doctor is able to submit a Special Authority request to PharmaCare so you can get a supply of an NRT product. If there is a delay or you need additional NRT products they can be obtained through the NIHB program.

3. Accessing treatment after completion of initial course or a relapse

You completed the 12-week course of treatment using a prescription drug or NRT product under the BC Smoking Cessation Program but started to smoke again in the same year you completed the treatment. You decide that you would like to try quitting once more but realize that you have to wait until January 1 of the following year to access the treatment again under the BC Smoking Cessation Program.

Quitting smoking can be difficult and it can take several attempts to completely quit. If you want to try to quit smoking again in the same year you completed the 12-week course of treatment through the BC Smoking Cessation Program, you can get access to NRT products under the NIHB program. Please note that you can only access the NRT products under the NIHB program and may not be able to access additional smoking cessation prescription drugs.

Why do I have to sign a declaration form?

To access coverage for your benefits from the BC Smoking Cessation Program, you and your pharmacist must sign a declaration form each time you need a supply of smoking cessation products or drugs. The purpose of the declaration is to show:

1. You confirm you have met the eligibility requirements of the program, and;
2. The pharmacist agrees to the program and documentation requirements.

The declaration also documents the treatment option you and your health care providers have chosen to help you on your smoking cessation journey.



For more information or questions, contact:
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