

# Breaking the bank

## Should glucose test strips cost a fortune?

### CASE

70 year old male with history of T2DM (A1C 7.9 %) on multiple DM medications including NPH, metformin, linagliptin, and dapagliflozin. He usually tests his blood glucose at least 4 times per week but recently testing less due to cost concerns with blood glucose test strips.

He asks if there was any way PharmaCare could help cover the costs. He does not recall receiving diabetes management training.



**PharmaCare covers blood glucose test strips if patient meets ALL of the following criteria.**

### 1. Patient is enrolled in one (or more) of these plans:

- Fair PharmaCare, Plan C (Income Assistance),
- Plan F (At Home Program), or
- Plan W (First Nations Health Benefits)

AND

### 2. Blood glucose testing has been deemed medically necessary for the patient.

AND

### 3. Patient receives diabetes management training.

The diabetes education centre must fax the training certificate to Health Insurance BC (HIBC).

Once diabetes training is completed, a voucher will be provided which will allow one-time coverage of blood glucose test strips (to a maximum of \$100). This voucher can be used at the pharmacy to make the first test strip purchase if the patient's eligibility information is not yet updated in PharmaNet.

## Annual quantity limits

PharmaCare covers a maximum number of blood glucose test strips each calendar year. The maximum amount that is covered depends on the diabetes treatment the patient is receiving. See below for the annual quantity limits of blood glucose test strips.

Treatment category	Notes	Annual limit
<b>With insulin and without the use of a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) nor a flash glucose monitor (FGM)</b>	If you take insulin and are not also using a CGM or an FGM, this limit applies whether or not you are also taking other diabetes medications.	3,000
<b>With insulin and with the use of a CGM or FGM</b>	If you are using a CGM or FGM, you may also occasionally need blood glucose test strips (for example, if you see an error code on you CGM/FGM or if your symptoms don't match your monitor's readings).	200
<b>Anti-hyperglycemic medications with a higher risk of causing hypoglycemia</b>	Drugs with a higher risk of hypoglycemia include insulin secretagogues: Sulfonylureas such as glyburide, and Eglitinides such as repaglinide	400
<b>Anti-hyperglycemic medications with a lower risk of causing hypoglycemia</b>	Drugs with a lower risk of hypoglycemia include: Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors such as acarbose Biguanides such as metformin Dipeptidyl peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitors such as linagliptin Incretin mimetics/glucagon-like peptide (GLP-1) agonists such as semaglutide Sodium-glucose cotransporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors such as empagliflozin, and Thiazolidinediones (TZDs) such as pioglitazone	200
<b>Through diet/lifestyle</b>	-	200

### Back to our case:

As our patient has not received diabetes management training, he should be referred to the closest outpatient diabetes health centre. Once diabetes education is complete and training certificate is faxed to Health Insurance BC, PharmaCare will begin to cover his blood glucose test strips. Since he uses NPH insulin and does not use CGM or FGM, his annual limit would be 3,000 blood glucose test strips each calendar year.

### Fraser Health Outpatient Diabetes Health Centre Referral form:

[https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Topics/Diabetes/DiabetesEducationReferral\\_June2023.pdf](https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Topics/Diabetes/DiabetesEducationReferral_June2023.pdf)