



# NIGHTINGALE

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## Understanding Ostomy Coverage in 2019

The Fraser sockeye run is nearing its completion, communities continue to rebuild following the summer wildfires and there's a chill in the air - Fall has arrived in BC. With this comes the reminder that come January 1st, the 2019 family deductible limit for those on the Fair PharmaCare program will reset back to zero.

We are often asked, "Do I have to pay for my ostomy supplies?" The answer is this: a BC resident is eligible for Fair PharmaCare. Exceptions to this are those covered by Non-Insured Health Benefits for first Nations and Inuit and Nisga'a Health Valley authority.

### How does Fair PharmaCare work?

A resident of BC needs to be registered for Fair PharmaCare. To do this you will need your BC Care Card and to have filed income tax for the past two years.

### What is a deductible?

A deductible is a specified amount of money that the insured must pay before an insurance company will pay a claim. Each family has a deductible that will need to be reached prior to Fair PharmaCare covering any portion of your eligible medical expenses.

### How is the deductible determined?

The Fair PharmaCare deductible is based on the family net income reported to Revenue Canada, two years prior. For example, your 2019 deductible will be based on your family's net income for 2017. If your income has decreased by more than 10% in the past two years you may be eligible for more coverage. Thus, it is important to contact Fair PharmaCare to organize a reassessment.

### What is covered by Fair PharmaCare?

BC PharmaCare covers the following items:

- pouches, flanges, stoma caps, stoma patches
- irrigation and night drainage kits
- skin care wipes, sprays and adhesive removers
- skin barriers, paste, skin prep, micropore tape
- internal deodorants such as Devrom
- ostomy belts (not including hernia support belts)

Items NOT covered by Fair PharmaCare include ostomy deodorants/lubricants; tape (other than paper tape); wound dressing; and continence supplies (such as catheters, leg bags, etc.) For a complete list of the items covered, please visit: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare/ostomy.pdf>

(continued on next page)



## Understanding Ostomy Coverage in 2019 (cont'd)

If you are currently purchasing prescription medication, ask your pharmacist if you have any PharmaCare coverage. It is likely that you have already registered with PharmaCare but it's good to double check. Your ostomy product purchases will go towards the same deductible as your prescription medications. Thus, you should reach your deductible sooner than previous years.

**For Example:**

*Your deductible is \$1,000*

**Medication A:** \$300 for 3 months

**Medication B:** \$200 for 3 months

You will have paid your deductible by June 30th if you had ordered these on January 1st. You would then be covered 70%. However, now that you have an

Ostomy you are spending \$250 per 3 months on product. You should reach your deductible sooner, by (approximately) the end of April.

**Private Medical Insurance:**

If you have private medical insurance you will still need to register for Fair PharmaCare. Your purchase will automatically be submitted to PharmaCare by Nightingale Medical Supplies. This allows for your eligible ostomy supplies to go towards your deductible. You will then need to submit your Nightingale invoice to your private insurance provider. The amount covered will depend on your policy.

Students between the ages of 19-24 years old who are enrolled in post-secondary education

full time can remain under parental coverage. Dependents under 19 must register as an individual before the end of the year that they turn 19. They must pay their own MSP premiums and file an income tax return from the past two years (even if it is for \$0) in order to become eligible for Fair PharmaCare.

What to do with the balance not covered by private insurance or prior to reaching your deductible? You can save your receipts and submit them on your tax return.

To learn more about the PharmaCare program, visit <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/medical/>

To confirm that you are registered for Fair PharmaCare, call: (604) 683-7151 in Vancouver, or toll-free from elsewhere (800) 663-7100.



## 2018 Holiday Reminder

December is a very busy month at Nightingale Medical Supplies. As the holidays approach and winter conditions develop, the weather can be unpredictable and deliveries may be delayed. Please ensure you have sufficient supplies on hand. Don't get caught in the cold this winter - order ahead of time.

Secondly, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, PharmaCare benefits will be reset. If you're counting on PharmaCare coverage, remember to place your order before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Our December holiday hours are as follows:

DECEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	JANUARY
24-25	26-29	30	31	1	2
<i>closed</i>	open regular hours	<i>closed</i>	open regular hours	<i>closed</i>	open regular hours



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Ask a  
**WOC**

**Q.** I have itchy skin, what should I do?

**A.** Itchy skin occurs in about 60% of people wearing an ostomy appliance. Make sure you stay well hydrated because dry skin can cause itchiness. If you are itchy but your skin looks healthy, try a small amount of ostomy conditioning cream. If your skin is red, raw and painful you may have an allergy to the product, a fungal rash, or a leaking ostomy appliance that has caused your skin to be raw.

There are many reasons for itchy skin and an assessment by your WOC nurse may be needed.



## Supporting A Loved One After Surgery



November 13 is National Caregiver Appreciation Day, a day in which to recognize the important work that caregivers, both paid and unpaid, provide. If a friend or family member has recently undergone a colostomy, ileostomy or urostomy, you may be wondering about ways you can support him or her. Often it is the simple things that can make a world of difference to someone recovering from a life-changing surgery. Some suggestions are provided below:

**Meals:** make up a big batch of soup, stew or pasta and then portion them into freezable containers so they can be pulled out and reheated. Avoid foods that can cause gas. Check these dietary guidelines: <https://nightingalemedical.ca/blogs/news/dietary-guidelines-for-colostomates>.

**Gift ideas:** thoughtful things like **curved ostomy scissors** make cutting a hole in the baseplate to fit around the stoma WAY easier; **moisturizing lotion** helps prevent skin from becoming dry as the body adjusts and heals post-surgery; a **water bottle** or a neat **beverage dispenser** for the home to encourage hydration; a selection of calming **teas** like chamomile and mint relieves stress while hydrating.

**Gift Cards:** to a local restaurant that delivers, or to a cleaning service that can come for a couple of hours, can provide instant relief to a friend who is exhausted.

**Childcare:** offering to babysit or helping with driving duty to activities can take a load off of shoulders.

**Chores:** doing laundry, throwing out garbage, watering plants, mowing the lawn, picking up a few things at Costco during your regular run – handling these simple but time-consuming activities will be appreciated.

**Listen:** often just listening and providing reassurance brings greatest comfort. Help find a support group that understands first-hand what they are going through <http://www.ostomyCanada.ca>.





# Cancer de Mama Clinic

By Cayley Elcombe

As a dedicated volunteer for Cancer de Mama Clinic (CdMC), **Sandy Archer** has been working with breast cancer survivors in Mexico for several years. What she discovered was not only a great feeling of satisfaction through helping others, but also a close connection with those women and other volunteers.



### CE: How did you become involved with CdMC?

SA: I am from Langley B.C. and most winters we exchange the coastal rains for the sunny and beautiful beaches of Mexico. While searching for “things to do” in the area we would be staying, I discovered CdMC. I have been a volunteer for three years at CdMC in La Penita, Nayarit. I am not a survivor of breast cancer, but I am a survivor of losing my beloved sister to breast cancer. She and I shared many of those sunny and beautiful beaches in Mexico. My commitment, as a volunteer for the CdMC, is to honour my sister and to help our Mexican sisters survive breast cancer with comfort and dignity. What an incredible and satisfying experience!

### CE: What is your role?

SA: My volunteer job is a “Greeter”. I usher our Mexican clients to a translator, who warmly greets the ladies in Spanish. Before the clients are ushered to the bra fitting room, Holly, one of our translators expertly and kindly explains what to expect. With the prosthetic bra fitting complete, I lead our clients to the various clinic venues to receive their further donated items and services. This year, through our volunteer network, I was also able to answer the call to pick up a generous donation of breast forms and pocketed bras from Nightingale Medical in Vancouver. Those precious boxes of donations were then picked up at my home by another volunteer. She then delivered the boxes to the Okanagan area, where they were distributed and will be transported by RV volunteers heading to La Penita in October and November. Destination Cancer de Mama Clinic 2019!

### CE: How many women attend the clinic each year?

SA: Every year up to 500 local Mexican women breast cancer survivors and busloads of breast cancer survivors from afar travel long distances to attend three-day CdMC in La Penita. At the Clinic, all breast cancer survivors receive donated breast forms and prosthetic bras, lymphedema support, hats, scarves, shawls, jewelry, wigs, makeup application and lunch, at no charge.

### CE: What do volunteers help with?

SA: The CdMC depends on donations and volunteers. There are various volunteer jobs, such as knitting/ sewing supplies, donating supplies, transporting products to Mexico, and helping at the Clinic itself. Volunteers also supply kindness, smiles, laughter, hugs, caring, empathy, and comfort; all with dignity. From our dear Mexican sisters we receive an overabundance of “gracias”, “God bless you”, warm hugs, laughter and heartfelt love and appreciation. The ladies often bring offerings to volunteers, handmade gifts, home baked goods and even fresh picked blueberries. Many Mexican locals also volunteer each year. I feel a great satisfaction of connecting with and helping others, which kindles happiness within me. Volunteering at CdMC is a definite highlight of my winter stays in Mexico. I truly believe that volunteering makes the world a better place. I am very proud to be one of more than 150 Canadian, Mexican and American volunteers!



*Nightingale Medical Supplies collects new and gently used mastectomy items to donate every year. If you are interested in donating items such as bras, mastectomy bras, breast forms and lymphedema sleeves, please bring them to any of our eight locations. The next clinic is February 1-3, 2019. For more information, please visit: [www.cancerdemamaclinic.com](http://www.cancerdemamaclinic.com).*

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and BRA Day is again being offered as a free event that brings together leading breast reconstruction experts with mastectomy patients and caregivers.



BRA (Breast Reconstruction Awareness) Day was started in 2011 by Dr. Mitchell Brown, a Toronto plastic surgeon who saw the urgent need for improved breast reconstruction education, awareness and access. The goal was to educate patients about their choice for reconstruction when undergoing a mastectomy, and to ensure adequate access for reconstructive surgery. Within only two years the BRA Day movement spread across Canada and to over 30 countries.



BRA Day attendees will have the opportunity to learn about complications and cancer treatment considerations when contemplating breast reconstruction. In addition to a Q&A forum with the expert panel, participants also have the opportunity to connect with women who have experienced breast reconstruction, and see real results of reconstruction in the Show & Tell Lounge.

For women choosing to undergo breast reconstruction, Nightingale Medical offers tissue expander breast forms (for use during reconstruction), silicone breast forms (for delayed reconstruction) and compression bras, garments and high-waisted underwear (for use following breast reconstruction and abdominal fat-grafting surgery).

Check out a local BRA Day event near you:

**Vancouver** VGH Oct 17 5-9pm  
**Fraser Valley** SFU Oct 18 6-9pm

See <http://www.bra-day.com/canadian-bra-day-events/> for locations and registration information.

## Look Good Feel Better Program

Nightingale Medical is now an official retailer of the Look Good Feel Better organization's new Breast Cancer Program. In this free 2-hour session, cancer survivors receive supportive, informative and inspiring strategies for managing the effects that cancer and its treatments have on appearance. It includes the original Look Good Feel Better workshop, which teaches valuable tools and techniques on cosmetic hygiene, skin care, cosmetics, hair and wig alternatives, followed by a segment on bra and breast form options, fitting tips and managing lymphedema presented by one of Nightingale Medical's certified mastectomy fitters. The LGFB program is currently offered at 100 hospital and cancer care facilities across Canada.

Visit <https://lgfb.ca> to learn more about this important program and upcoming session dates.



## How Clean is Your Produce?



For the third year in a row, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) organization has found that strawberries topped the 2018 "Dirty Dozen" list with 22 separate pesticide residues found, and 1/3 of all samples containing 10 or more pesticides! On the "Clean 15" list, avocados again earned highest kudos with the least pesticides.

### Dirty (Baker's) Dozen

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Nectarines
4. Apples
5. Grapes
6. Peaches
7. Cherries
8. Pears
9. Tomatoes
10. Celery
11. Potatoes
12. Sweet bell peppers
13. Hot peppers

### The Clean 15

1. Avocados
2. Sweet corn
3. Pineapple
4. Cabbage
5. Onions
6. Frozen sweet peas
7. Papayas
8. Asparagus
9. Mangoes
10. Eggplant
11. Honeydew melon
12. Kiwi
13. Cantaloupe
14. Cauliflower
15. Broccoli

**Reminder:** remove pesticide residue from all fresh fruits and vegetables by rinsing or soaking in regular tap water for 30 seconds.







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\*Promo code: CSBR03, expires Dec. 31/18. Some restrictions apply.



**ARE YOU COVERED?**

If you sit or stand a lot during the day, or travel long distances by plane, your extended benefits plan likely covers compression stockings, socks and garments, provided they are prescribed by a doctor and of "Medical Grade Compression", ie. 20 mmHg of pressure or more. Other medically-necessary equipment such as knee braces and orthopedic shoes may be similarly covered.

Since most extended benefits plans reset on January 1st each year, it's a timely reminder to obtain your medical equipment before the end of the year.

Follow these 3 steps:

**Step 1 Call your Extended Benefits Plan**

Find out what specific coverage and requirements you have. For example, knee braces are considered

medical equipment/devices' and most insurers will typically pay 100% with no deductibles. Also verify what the doctor's prescription must state.

**Step 2 Get a Prescription**

Most insurance companies require you to get a note from a doctor, physiotherapist or chiropractor if you want your medical equipment covered. In the case of a knee brace, the prescription should state the diagnosis and include the reason for needing it; anticipated duration the brace will be required; description of what activities the knee brace will be primarily worn for (daily living, sports, etc.); verification if this is an initial purchase, otherwise reason for replacement; type of knee brace required; and purchase price if known.

**Step 3: Submit for Reimbursement**

Submit the claim form with the proof of purchase (receipts) AND your doctor's note in order to receive reimbursement.

## 6 Signs You May Have A Blood Clot

Most of the time, blood clots are a good thing. When you get injured, you need your blood to solidify and clump together at the site to help stop the bleeding. But when blood clots form in this deep veins near your muscles, they can be painful and very dangerous. This kind of clot is called a deep vein thrombosis, or DVT. DVTs are like roadblocks on your blood highway—they cause traffic jams in your circulation and prevent the blood flow that keeps your system up and running.



If a DVT breaks away from its original spot and travels to your lungs, it becomes a pulmonary embolism (PE), a clot that prevents these vital organs from getting the oxygen and blood they need. That can damage your lungs and other organs and may even be fatal.

Know the warning signs so you can act quickly. It's important to recognize symptoms because they can often be minimal or overlooked, so know the warning signs so you can get prompt treatment.

### 1) Swelling in One Limb

A puffy leg or arm is one of the most common signs of a DVT. Blood clots can block the healthy flow of blood in the legs, and blood can pool behind the clot causing swelling. It's normal to overlook leg swelling as a symptom of a DVT if you always get large or stiff legs when you fly or during periods of immobility. But be suspicious if your bloated limb comes on quickly, especially if there is pain.

### 2) Severe Leg or Arm Pain

Usually, DVT pain comes as a combo with other symptoms like swelling or redness, but sometimes it can stand alone. Pain from a blood clot can easily be mistaken for a muscle cramp or strain, which is why the issue often goes undiagnosed and is specifically dangerous. DVT pain tends to strike when you're walking or when you flex your foot upward. If you have a severe, unexplained pain like a charley horse that you can't seem to shake—especially if the skin near it is warm or discolored—see your doctor.

### 3) Redness on your Skin

While it's true that a bruise is a type of blood clot, it's not the type you have to worry about. You can't see a DVT. You might see some bruise-like discoloration, but you're more likely to see red. A DVT causes redness in the affected limb and makes your arm or leg feel warm to the touch.

### 4) Chest Pain

Both a PE and a heart attack share similar symptoms, however, PE pain tends to be sharp and stabbing, and feels worst when you take a deep breath. Heart attack pain however often radiates from upper areas of your body like your shoulders, jaw, or neck. The biggest clue is in your breathing—PE pain gets steadily worse with every breath you take. Either way, you need help immediately, so call 911.

### 5) Shortness of Breath (or Racing Heart)

A blood clot in your lung slows your O<sub>2</sub> flow. When oxygen is low, your heart rate goes high to try to make up for the shortage. Feeling a flutter in your chest and having trouble with deep breaths could be your body sending out an SOS that you've got a PE lurking in your lungs. You might also feel faint or even pass out. Get help if any of these symptoms come on suddenly.

### 6) Unexplained Cough

If you're also having shortness of breath, fast heart rate, or chest pain, it could be a PE. The cough will be dry, but sometimes people can cough up mucus and/or blood. When in doubt, see your doc or go straight to the ER.

### Treatment Options for DVT

**Blood thinner medications** such as heparin, warfarin, enoxaparin, or fondaparinux makes it harder for your blood to clot. It also keeps existing clots as small as possible and decreases the chance that you'll develop more clots. If you have severe DVT, your doctor might use thrombolytic drugs which break up clots and are administered through IV.

A **filter** placed inside the large abdominal vein called the vena cava can short-term prevent PE clots from entering your lungs but there's a long term risk it can actually cause DVT.

**Wearing compression socks** can prevent swelling, improve circulation and may lower your chance of developing clots in the first place. They don't, however, demonstrate a reduction in recurrent DVT. Your doctor may recommend you wear these every day.

Obtain a prescription and schedule a visit with Nightingale's certified compression fitter who can help you choose the most suitable pair.

Source: menshealth.com



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