



# Non-Insured Health Benefits

Drug Bulletin

July 2003

The NIHB Program provides supplementary health benefits, including prescription and non-prescription drugs, for registered Indians, and recognized Inuit and Innu throughout Canada.

Visit our Web Site at: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb/nihb](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fnihb/nihb)

## ADDITIONS TO THE DRUG BENEFIT LIST (OPEN BENEFITS)

(Effective April 1, 2003)

**Thyrotropin alpha, injectable, 0.9mg/ml**  
(*Thyrogen-Genzyme Canada*)

Thyrotropin is indicated for use in the follow-up, monitoring phase of patients who have been fully treated for a diagnosis of well-differentiated thyroid carcinoma.

**Valganciclovir, tablet, 450 mg**  
(*Valcyte-Hoffman-LaRoche Limited*)

This agent is indicated for the treatment of CMV retinitis.

## CHANGE IN BENEFIT STATUS

(Effective April 1, 2003)

**Clopidogrel, tablet, 75 mg**  
(*Plavix-Sanofi-Synthelabo Canada*)

Open Benefit

(Effective April 1, 2003)

**Potassium (Oral Solid Dosage Form)**

In 1997, solid, oral, sustained release potassium products were delisted from the Drug Benefit List. Although liquid dosage forms of potassium are available on the NIHB Drug Benefit List, tolerance and convenience may be a concern with these dosage forms. To maintain continuity with other provincial and jurisdictional formularies, NIHB will list specific strengths and brands of oral solid potassium. Please refer to the Summer Update, July 2003, for product listings.

## NEW LIMITED USE BENEFITS (Prior approval required)

(Effective April 1, 2003)

**Imatinib, capsule, 100 mg**  
(*Gleevec-Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.*)

Imatinib has been approved for a new indication, the treatment of Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumour (GIST). This new indication has been added to the limited use criteria for Imatinib.

## NEW LIMITED USE BENEFITS (cont'd) (Prior approval required)

(Effective April 1, 2003)

Both of the following drugs will be available as limited use benefits with the same criteria as the other strengths listed in the Drug Benefit List.

**Alendronate, once a week tablet, 70 mg once a week**  
(*Fosamax-Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.*)

**Risedronate, once a week tablet, 35 mg**  
(*Actonel-Aventis Pharma Inc.*)

Their use will be limited to the treatment of:

- osteoporosis in patients who have documented hip, vertebral or other fractures or;
- osteoporosis in patients with intolerance or lack of response to etidronate or etidronate/calcium.

## ADDITIONS TO THE SPECIAL FORMULARY FOR CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE PATIENTS

(Effective April 1, 2003)

**Darbepoetin alfa, injectable**  
(*Aranesp-Amgen Canada*)

In the following strengths:

- 10 mcg (25 mcg/ml)
- 20 mcg (40 mcg/ml)
- 30 mcg, 40 mcg, 50 mcg (100 mcg/ml)
- 60 mcg, 80 mcg, 100 mcg (200 mcg/ml)
- 150 mcg (500 mcg/ml)

## NIHB DECISION NOT TO ADD THE FOLLOWING DRUGS TO THE NIHB DRUG BENEFIT LIST

**Tegaserod, tablet, 6 mg**  
(*Zelnorm-Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.*)

**Zoledronic Acid, injectable, 4 mg**  
(*Zometa-Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.*)

**Fondaparinux, injectable, 2.5 mg**  
(*Arixtra-Organon Sanofi-Synthelabo Canada*)

Health Canada Advisory Website: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/tpd-dpt/index\\_advisories\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/tpd-dpt/index_advisories_e.html)

Health Canada Adverse Reaction Information Website: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/tpd-dpt/index\\_adverse\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/tpd-dpt/index_adverse_e.html)

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