

## **Pharmacists Assessment and Prescribing for Shingles (Herpes Zoster) – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the service being offered?**

As of June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Government of New Brunswick will pay pharmacists in New Brunswick to assess and, if necessary, prescribe medication for shingles infections at pharmacies. Please note that the cost of any prescribed medication is not covered under the program.

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, pharmacists in NB received regulatory approval to assess and prescribe medication for shingles infections. Beginning June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the province will cover the cost of this service for eligible NB residents.

### **Am I eligible for this service?**

To be eligible for this service, you must:

- Be a resident of NB with a valid NB Medicare Card;
- Be aged 12 and older;
- Have signs and symptoms of shingles infection (including a rash);
- Not reside in a nursing home.

Before visiting the pharmacy, please contact your pharmacist to determine if you are eligible for this service.

### **Can a pharmacist treat me for shingles if I don't have a primary care provider?**

Yes. The pharmacist can assess and, if appropriate, prescribe medication even if you do not have a primary care provider.

### **Can I use this service if I don't have a rash?**

While it is possible to have shingles without a rash, this is not considered a typical presentation of shingles and you should be assessed and treated by a GP or NP.

### **Are there other times when pharmacists cannot provide this service?**

Pharmacists may not be able to provide this service to those with certain medical conditions. In those cases, the pharmacist may refer the patient to an appropriate health care provider. Patients should contact their pharmacist for more information.

### **How many times can I use this service?**

You can use this service once in a 365-day period.

**What if I need the service after I have met the maximum?**

You are eligible for one (1) service in a 365-day period. After this, you will need to see a primary care provider. Most people will have only one occurrence of shingles in their lifetime.

**What if I go to a different pharmacy for the assessment?**

Any medications prescribed for you are recorded on the provincial drug registry which all pharmacists can see and refer to.

**Does the service cover the cost of the prescribed medication?**

No. This service does not cover the cost of the dispensing fee or the cost of the prescribed medication. The cost of the medication depends on if you have a prescription drug plan and the type of drug plan you have. If you have a drug plan, the pharmacy can submit the claim for the medication for payment. You are responsible for any remaining balance.

**What if I have private medical insurance that covers pharmacist services?**

If you have private medical insurance that covers the assessment, the pharmacist will submit a claim for payment for the service to your private insurance. Any remaining balance owed will be covered by the province.

**Can I take my prescription to a different pharmacy?**

Yes. You can take the prescription to another pharmacy to be filled.

**Will my primary care provider be informed?**

Yes. After the pharmacist assesses and prescribes a medication for shingles infection, they will notify your primary care provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, the pharmacist will give you a copy of the notice to keep until you have one.

If you are at higher risk (ie. immunocompromised) or the pharmacist assesses you as having a complicated case of shingles, they may prescribe a medication and refer you to see a primary care provider.

**What happens if my shingles infection does not get better?**

Your pharmacist will develop a follow-up plan to monitor your progress. A referral to a primary care provider may be recommended if symptoms persist.

**Does this service cover the costs of vaccinations?**

No. This service does not include the administration of vaccines for shingles infection.

**Do all pharmacies in NB offer this service?**

It is best to call your pharmacy to find out.

**Do I need an appointment?**

Some pharmacies may require an appointment. It is best to call your pharmacy to find out.

**Can this service be provided by phone or video appointment?**

No. The service must be provided in person by a pharmacist.

**Where can I find out more information about this service?**

Call your pharmacist for details. Information about shingles assessment and prescribing by pharmacists can be found on the New Brunswick College of Pharmacists website: [https://nbcpc.in1touch.org/document/6901/GUIDANCE%20%20ASSESSING%20AND%20PRESCRIBING%20FOR%20TREATMENT%20OF%20HERPES%20ZOSTER%20\(SHINGLES\).pdf](https://nbcpc.in1touch.org/document/6901/GUIDANCE%20%20ASSESSING%20AND%20PRESCRIBING%20FOR%20TREATMENT%20OF%20HERPES%20ZOSTER%20(SHINGLES).pdf)