

Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

This resource provides health professionals and care providers with a summary of funding options that are available in Alberta for special diets and nutrition products, and the required steps for funding requests.

Definitions

- **Special diets:** a diet in which food types and quantities are modified for certain medical conditions or life stages.
- **Nutrition products:** may include nutrition supplements (drinks, puddings, bars), protein powders, enteral formulas, infant formulas, vitamin and mineral supplements, and thickening agents.

Considerations

Scope of Practice and Workflow

- Consider the professional scope of practice and program-specific resources and decisions to determine who is best suited to complete the funding requests.
- Some benefit programs will accept a recommendation for a nutrition product or special diet from a regulated provider; however, some will specify that a prescription is required from a registered prescriber.
- Some programs may require annual or periodic review and resubmission of funding letters.
- If the funding application requires the disclosure of health information to an organization outside of Alberta Health Services, written consent is required using the Consent to Disclose Health Information form (available in the Consent Navigator in Connect Care, and on Insite).
- Letter templates are available in Connect Care to support funding requests for certain benefit programs. They can also be found at ahs.ca/FoodInsecurity (under, “Practice Support Resources”).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Alberta Blue Cross

- The Alberta Blue Cross [Interactive Drug Benefit List](#) (iDBL) is a searchable database for the Alberta Government-sponsored drug programs. When checking coverage status, health professionals may need to use different search terms to obtain accurate results (e.g., use “vitamin” when looking for prenatal vitamins).
 - If a product is not listed in the iDBL, it may not have been requested by the manufacturer for addition (i.e. newer products) and/or is exempt.
 - Updates to the iDBL are made yearly, so it is important to check regularly.
- Registered dietitians (RDs) are now eligible prescribers of infant formulas, oral nutrition supplements, and protein powders listed as regular benefits on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL).
- RDs can also complete Special Drug Authorization Request forms (available from [Alberta Blue Cross](#) and Connect Care) for infant formulas, oral nutrition supplements, protein powders, and thickening agents as required (except for Puramino A+® or Neocate® with DHA and ARA).
- For more information, refer to the [RDs as Prescribers of Nutrition Products FAQ](#).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Summary of Funding Options

Funding options are summarized below based on age and are hyperlinked to support navigation to the applicable practice population.

Pediatric (Under 18 Years)	Adults (18–65 Years)	Older Adults (Over 65 Years)	All Ages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Blue Cross: Non-Group Coverage Alberta Child Health Benefit Family Support for Children with Disabilities Jordan’s Principle Pediatric Home Nutrition Support Program <p>Additional benefit programs that can be applied to dependents/families include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Income Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Adult Health Benefit Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped Home Nutrition Support Program Income Support Persons with Developmental Disabilities Veterans Affairs Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program Home Nutrition Support Program Special Needs Assistance for Seniors Veterans Affairs Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Federal Health Program Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Pediatric Funding Options (Under 18 Years)

A description of funding options available for pediatric clients (under 18 years) and the required steps for funding requests are provided below. For each funding option listed, refer to the program webpage for program details and eligibility criteria.

Note: additional benefit programs that can be applied to dependents/families include:

- [Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped](#) (health benefits and special diets)
- [Income Support](#) (health benefits and special diets)

Description	Required Steps
Alberta Blue Cross Non-Group Coverage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides coverage for health-related services such as prescription drugs, medical supplies and other health services. • Family coverage is available to all Alberta residents under 65 years of age and eligible dependents. A monthly premium is charged once coverage is active. • Information on nutrition product coverage (and coverage criteria) will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL). • Clients may receive coverage for amino acid-based infant formulas (Neocate® Infant with DHA and ARA, or Puramino A+®) with Special Authorization (RDs are exempt from completing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before active coverage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Consult a social worker ◦ Family applies for Non-Group Coverage (even if already has Alberta Blue Cross Group Insurance) ◦ Can access the Nutricia bridging program (for Neocate®) or coupons from Mead Johnson (for Puramino A+®) for a waiting period (usually three months) • After coverage is active: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber ◦ The Drug Special Authorization Request form for the amino acid-based infant formula is completed by the prescriber (e.g. neonatologist, general pediatrician) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the full name of the formula is detailed: “Neocate® Infant with DHA and ARA” or “Puramino A+®”

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
<u>Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers health benefits for children in low-income households. Benefits include coverage for prescription drugs and some over-the-counter products (including children’s vitamins/minerals, prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements). Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL). If the product requires special authorization, this will be indicated on the iDBL, and a link to the special authorization form will be provided. If special authorization is not available or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber. If a request for an exception is required, the Request for Health Benefit Exception form is completed by the client, and the Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form is completed by the physician/medical practitioner.
<u>Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps families access supports and services for a child with disabilities. Helps with some costs for special diets, nutrition supplements, and enteral formulas. Families are required to pay a parent portion of the cost. Explore the eligibility of other available funding options (e.g. ACHB) that may provide full coverage prior to the FSCD request. RDs can use the FSCD Diet Costing Toolkit and Process for Completing AHS NS FSCD Letter available on Insite for AHS staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RD completes the AHS Nutrition Services Request for Nutrition Funding Family Support for Children with Disabilities form (available on Insite for AHS staff) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires annual renewal

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Jordan's Principle	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves access to health, social, and education services and supports for First Nations and Inuit children, living both on and off reserve. Refer to the webpage and Jordan's Principle 101 for more information, instructions on how to submit a request and eligibility criteria. Helps families navigate provincial and federal service systems, and responds to gaps in publicly funded healthcare. Clients can access support for funding requests through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) or First Nations Health Consortium (FNHC) Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. May cover unmet needs for nutrition products, special diets, and services to improve the nutrition status of a child. Examples include, but are not limited to, helping to cover the cost of special diets required for a specific medical condition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the ISC regional focal point or the FNHC to discuss a potential application and initiate the intake process (family member/health professional/care provider). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the regional focal point can't be reached, contact Jordan's Principle Call Centre (open 24 hours). Signed documentation from a health professional or other care provider is required to support requests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request a Support Letter Guide from the Regional Service Coordinator assigned to the case. Provide supporting documentation as per the area of expertise/professional scope of practice. Letters of support should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the client's diagnosis/identified need Directly recommend specific products, services, or supports that the client requires Specify how often and how long the specified product, service, or support is required for the client

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Pediatric Home Nutrition Support Program (PHNSP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports clients and their families to manage tube feeding at home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Alberta: Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric ○ Southern Alberta: Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric ○ Note: clients residing in Red Deer will be referred to the region where they receive most of their health services. Clients and families in rural areas may also be supported through local feeding teams. • Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies. • Helps clients navigate funding options as required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Alberta: Charges a co-payment fee for formula. ○ Southern Alberta: There is no co-payment; families are required to pay for the cost of formula. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A referral to the program is required to access products and services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Alberta: Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric ○ Southern Alberta: Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Adult Funding Options (18–65 Years)

A description of funding options available for adult clients (18–65 years old) and the required steps for funding requests is provided below. For each funding option listed, refer to the program webpage for program details and eligibility criteria.

Description	Required Steps
Alberta Adult Health Benefit (AAHB)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides health benefits to Albertans in low-income households who are pregnant or have high ongoing prescription drug needs. Benefits include coverage for prescription drugs and some over-the-counter products (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements). Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL). If the product requires special authorization, this will be indicated on the iDBL, and a link to the special authorization form will be provided. If special authorization is not available or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber. If a request for an exception is required, the Request for Health Benefit Exception Committee (HBEC) form is completed by the client, and the Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form is completed by the physician/medical practitioner/prescriber.
Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program (PFAP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides temporary financial assistance to help pay for expenses related to cancer diagnosis and treatment. Nutrition supplements, groceries, and meal costs may be covered as part of the financial need. Refer to General FAQs. Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients require an Alberta Cancer Board Number Be an adult Alberta resident Eligibility is reviewed by the cancer centre social worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health professionals working in cancer care can refer to the social worker directly. The social worker also supports access to provincial, federal, and private insurance program resources. Refer to the brochure on social work for referral information.

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides financial assistance and health benefits for individuals (and their dependents) who have a permanent medical condition that substantially limits their ability to earn a living. • Those eligible for an AISH Health Benefits Card will receive coverage for prescription drugs and some over-the-counter and nutrition products (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements). • Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL). • If the product requires special authorization, this will be indicated on the iDBL, and a link to the special authorization form will be provided. • The Health Benefits Exception Committee (HBEC) makes decisions about requests for additional health benefits outside of what is covered through AISH (refer to the AISH Policy Manual). • May assist clients or their dependent children with the cost of a special diet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The benefit details and requirements for a letter of support are outlined in the Special Diets section of the AISH Policy Manual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note: some special diet types require additional documentation, such as test results. ▪ If Boost, Ensure or similar high calorie supplements are prescribed, then clients are not eligible for high calorie diet funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. • If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber. • If a request for additional benefits is required, the Request for HBEC form is completed by the client, and the Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form is completed by the physician/medical practitioner/prescriber. • For special diets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A letter is written by a dietitian, nurse, or physician (refer to the Letter Template: Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped under “Practice Support Resources”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send additional documentation, if required. ○ The letter is given to the client, or it can be sent directly to the AISH office the client is assigned to (refer to Contact AISH).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Home Nutrition Support Program (HNSP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports clients in managing tube feeding at home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults ◦ Southern Alberta Home Enteral Nutrition Program – Adults ◦ Note: clients residing in Red Deer will be referred to the region where they receive most of their health services. • Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies • Helps clients navigate funding options as required • Co-payments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta: Charges a monthly co-payment fee. ◦ Southern Alberta: There is no co-payment; all approved supplies and formulas are covered by the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A referral to the program is required to access products and services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults ◦ Southern Alberta Home Enteral Nutrition Program – Adults

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
<p><u>Income Support (Alberta Works)</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports for individuals and families to pay for basic expenses like food, clothing, and shelter. • Those eligible for health benefits receive coverage for prescription and non-prescription drugs and nutrition products. • Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding are eligible for prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplement coverage. • Infant and pediatric formulas can be issued as a health benefit (recommended) or a special diet. • Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross Interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL). • If the product requires special authorization, this will be indicated on the iDBL, and a link to the special authorization form will be provided. • If special authorization is not available or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: if clients are concurrently on NIHB and Income Support programs, and nutrition supplement coverage is declined through NIHB, consider accessing products via this process (refer to the “First Nations Clients Accessing Nutritional Supplements” bottom section of Alberta Works Policy Manual). • Clients may be eligible for Special Diet Funding to assist with the cost of special diets for medical reasons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The benefit details and requirements for a letter of support are outlined in the Special Diets section of the Alberta Works Policy Manual. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note: some special diet types require additional documentation, such as test results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. • If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber. • If a request for exception is required, the Request for HBEC form is completed by the client, and the Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form is completed by the physician/medical practitioner/ prescriber. • For special diets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A letter is written by a dietitian, nurse, or physician (refer to the Letter Template: Income Support under “Practice Support Resources”). • Send additional documentation, if required. • The letter is given to the client, or it can be sent directly to the Income Support worker/district office the client is assigned to (refer to Alberta Supports page for locations).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
<u>Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps adults with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible in their community. • Provides home living support, which can include meal preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDD caseworkers provide support with planning and accessing services.
<u>Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the well-being of Veterans and their families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Treatment benefits ◦ Veteran’s Independence Program • Treatment benefits (VAC healthcare card) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provides coverage for prescription drugs and some nutrition products ◦ A VAC healthcare card will be sent directly to clients who qualify ◦ Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Drug Formulary Search Form ◦ Refer to the Prescription Drug Program page for benefit categories • Veteran’s Independence Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provides funding for home care services. ◦ Includes access to nutrition service (e.g., meal delivery programs) and routine housekeeping services (can include meal preparation). ◦ Rates are defined by the program. ◦ Following the initial application (or when service needs change), an assessment is completed, and a Benefit Agreement is established to provide funds for services. ◦ A third-party contractor will process claims and provide payments (reimbursements, advance payments, or grants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. ◦ If special authorization is required, a physician or pharmacist needs to call the phone number provided on the Drug Formulary Search Form. • Veteran’s Independence Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Clients apply for the program to access services. ◦ Clients can contact VAC and speak with a Veterans Service Agent to arrange direct billing for meal delivery services (e.g., Meals on Wheels™).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Older Adult Funding Options (Over 65 Years)

A description of funding options available for older adult clients (over 65 years) and the required steps for funding requests are provided below. For each funding option listed, refer to the program webpage for program details and eligibility criteria.

Description	Required Steps
<u>Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program (PFAP)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides temporary financial assistance to help pay for expenses related to cancer diagnosis and treatment. Nutrition supplements, groceries, and meal costs may be covered as part of the financial need. Refer to the General FAQs. • Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Clients require an Alberta Cancer Board Number. ◦ Be an adult Alberta resident. • Eligibility is reviewed by the cancer centre social worker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health professionals working in cancer care can refer to the social worker directly. The social worker also supports access to provincial, federal, and private insurance program resources. • Refer to the brochure on social work for referral information.
Home Nutrition Support Program (HNSP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports clients in managing tube feeding at home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults ◦ Southern Alberta Home Enteral Nutrition Program – Adults ◦ Note: clients residing in Red Deer will be referred to the region where they receive most of their health services. • Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies • Helps clients navigate funding options as required • Co-payments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta: Charges a monthly co-payment fee. ◦ Southern Alberta: There is no co-payment; all approved supplies and formulas are covered by the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A referral to the program is required to access products and services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults ◦ Southern Alberta Home Enteral Nutrition Program – Adults

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Special Needs Assistance for Seniors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides financial assistance for low-income seniors. • Refer to the “Nutritional beverages” section under Eligible items (Health supports) for details on eligible products (including thickeners), funding maximums, and required documents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For thickeners, any product that has the word “thickener” in the product name will be funded upon receipt (i.e., clients need to purchase and submit the receipt for reimbursement). A letter of support for thickeners can be provided by a speech language pathologist (SLP). ○ Reimbursement is based on a defined amount per bottle (may not cover the full cost). There is also an annual funding maximum for nutritional beverages, including thickeners. • Special diet funding available for celiac disease, refer to “Celiac groceries” under Eligible items (Personal supports) for details on eligibility, funding maximums, and required documents. • Refer to “How to make a claim” for information on processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients must complete a one-time Seniors Financial Assistance application and be enrolled in this program to be eligible for nutrition products and special diets. • Once a year, clients must provide a letter of support from an RD, nurse practitioner (NP), or physician (refer to Letter Template: Special Needs Assistance for Seniors under “Practice Support Resources”). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide specific amounts of nutritional beverage you are recommending (i.e., instead of a range). ○ Example: “I have recommended that you supplement your diet with the following: 2 bottles Ensure nutritional beverage daily by mouth x 12 months” • If approved, clients will receive a lump-sum payment for a 3-month supply of nutrition products. Going forward, they are required to submit receipts for nutrition products purchased to be eligible for reimbursement. • A note from a physician or NP, confirming the diagnosis of celiac disease, is required with the initial funding request.

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
<u>Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the well-being of Veterans and their families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Treatment benefits ◦ Veteran's Independence Program • Treatment benefits (VAC healthcare card) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provides coverage for prescription drugs and some nutrition products. ◦ A VAC healthcare card will be sent directly to clients who qualify. ◦ Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Drug Formulary Search Form. ◦ Refer to the Prescription Drug Program page for benefit categories. • Veteran's Independence Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provides funding for home care services. ◦ Includes access to nutrition service (e.g., meal delivery programs) and routine housekeeping services (can include meal preparation). ◦ Rates are defined by the program. ◦ Following the initial application (or when service needs change), an assessment is completed, and a Benefit Agreement is established to provide funds for services. ◦ A third-party contractor often processes claims and provides payments (reimbursements, advance payments, or grants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. ◦ If special authorization is required, a physician or pharmacist needs to call the number provided on the Drug Formulary Search Form. • Veteran's Independence Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Clients apply for the program to access services. ◦ Clients can contact VAC and speak with a Veterans Service Agent to arrange direct billing for meal delivery services (e.g., Meals on Wheels™).

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

All Ages

A description of funding options available for clients of any age (that meet the program eligibility criteria) and the required steps for funding requests are provided below. For each funding option listed, refer to the program webpage for program details and eligibility criteria.

Description	Required Steps
Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides limited, temporary coverage of healthcare benefits for specific groups of people who do not have provincial or private healthcare coverage. Benefits include nutrition products listed on provincial public drug plan formularies, as well as additional vitamins/minerals/antianemia drugs (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements). Refer to “Prescription drug coverage” IFHP benefit grid for details. Supplemental coverage includes “assistive devices for eating and drinking” (e.g., enteral nutrition pumps and related supplies, enteral formula/nutrition supplements). Refer to the “Supplemental Coverage” IFHP benefit grid for details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a prescription for the product from the prescriber. Clients must go to a healthcare professional/pharmacy registered with Medavie Blue Cross to claim IFHP benefits (refer to IFHP Provider Search). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: healthcare professionals can register to be an approved provider with Medavie Blue Cross.

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for First Nations and Inuit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides eligible First Nations and Inuit clients with coverage for a range of health benefits that are not covered through other programs or plans. • Benefits include prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Vitamins/minerals (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements) ◦ Infant formula, nutrition supplements, enteral formulas, and thickening agents ◦ Additional nutrition products for clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ with chronic renal failure ▪ undergoing active cancer treatment ▪ with a terminal illness and are near the end of life • Information on nutrition product coverage can be found on the NIHB Drug Benefit List. • Products will be listed on the drug benefit list as an Open Benefit (no established criteria or prior approval requirements) or as a Limited Use Benefit (has established coverage criteria or requires prior approval). • If a product is not listed on the drug benefit list, it may still be considered for coverage (Except on a case-by-case basis) with prior approval. Denied benefits can be appealed. • Products listed on the Exclusion list (e.g., megavitamins) will not be covered. 	<p>Registered Prescriber (Physician or NP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the prescription and give it to your client to bring to their pharmacy, or send/fax it directly to the client’s pharmacy for them. • When the pharmacist receives the prescription (from the registered prescriber or client), they will contact the NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC). • The DEC will send an Exception or Limited Use Infant Formula or Nutritional Supplement Request form to the prescriber to complete for initial and any follow-up assessments. <p>Regulated Provider (RD or RN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the recommendation letter and give it to your client to bring to their pharmacy, or send/fax it to the client’s pharmacy for them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Refer to the Recommendation Letter Template: Non-Insured Health Benefits under “Practice Support Resources” ◦ Example: “Based on my nutrition assessment, I am recommending the following nutrition supplement: Ensure Plus 237 mL, 1-2 bottles daily by mouth x 6 months” • When the pharmacist receives the recommendation letter, they will contact the NIHB DEC. • The DEC will send an Exception or Limited Use Infant Formula or Nutritional Supplement Request form to the provider to complete for initial and any follow-up assessments.

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Description	Required Steps
Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for First Nations and Inuit (continued)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prior approval process for products requires one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prescription: from a registered prescriber (e.g., physician, NP). Refer to the role-specific steps and process. ◦ Recommendation letter: from a regulated provider (e.g., RD, RN). Refer to the role-specific steps and process. • Benefits are based on medical necessity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Note: this is documented when the health professional completes the Exception or Limited Use Infant Formula or Nutritional Supplement Request form • Approvals are valid for up to 12 months and then require review/renewal. • For more information on NIHB, refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Nutrition Policy Overview ◦ Non-Insured Health Benefits: Answers to Common Practice Questions About Coverage for Nutrition Products 	

Point of Care Reference: Funding Options for Special Diets and Nutrition Products

Additional Resources to Support Clients

- When individuals experience financial constraints, the food budget is often the first essential expense individuals cut back on. For information on how to support clients who experience household food insecurity, refer to the [Nutrition Guideline: Household Food Insecurity](#) and [Exploring Income Replacement & Benefit Programs financial strain module](#) (available on MyLearning Link for AHS staff and CLiC for Covenant Health staff).
- Local community programs may be able to provide support. 211 Alberta can help Albertans find resources and services in their community. Share [information](#) about 211 with your clients to see if the service might be helpful for them.
- Consider referral to a social worker (as available) to review resources and benefits that a client may be eligible for.
- Support may be available through the Community Action Programs for Children (CAPC) and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) projects found in several Alberta communities. These projects aim to improve the health and well-being of people who are pregnant, new parents, and babies facing challenging life circumstances. Refer to the [Alberta CAPC/CPNP Coalition](#) for more information, including location, eligibility, and services offered.
- Coverage for nutrition products may be available through private insurance plans.
- The Pediatric Eating and Swallowing (PEAS) page for a [Formula Coverage](#) search tool can also help determine what formulas are covered by benefit programs.

