

# 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 as well as program-specific resources and decisions to determine who is best suited to complete the required steps for funding requests.
- Some benefit programs will accept a recommendation for a nutrition product or special diet from a regulated provider (e.g., registered dietitian [RD], registered nurse [RN], etc.); however, some will specify that a prescription is required from a registered prescriber (e.g., physician, nurse practitioner [NP], etc.).
- If the funding application requires the disclosure of health information to an organization outside of Alberta Health Services, complete the Consent to Disclose Health Information form first (available on Insite and Connect Care for AHS staff).
- When searching the Alberta Blue Cross [Interactive Drug Benefit List](#) (iDBL), health professionals may need to try different search terms for accurate search results (e.g., use “vitamin” to search for prenatal vitamins).

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

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### 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, see [Nutrition Guideline: Household Food Insecurity](#) and [Exploring Income Replacement & Benefit Programs financial strain module](#) (available on MyLearning Link for AHS staff and on CLiC for Covenant Health staff).
- Refer to [Formula Coverage](#) on the Pediatric Eating and Swallowing (PEAS) page for additional information.
- Support may be available through the Community Action Programs for Children (CAPC) and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) projects found in several Albertan communities. These projects aim to improve the health and well-being of people who are pregnant, new parents, and babies facing challenging life circumstances. See [Alberta CAPC/CPNP Coalition](#) for more information including location, eligibility and services offered.
- Letter templates are available to support funding requests for certain benefit programs. Refer to [ahs.ca/FoodInsecurity](https://ahs.ca/FoodInsecurity) for more information (under “Practice Support Resources”).

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### Summary of Funding Options

Funding options are summarized below based on age and are hyperlinked to support with 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"><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Blue Cross: Non-Group Coverage</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Child Health Benefit</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Child and Youth Support Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Family Support for Children with Disabilities</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Jordan's Principle</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Pediatric Home Nutrition Support Program</a></li></ul> <p>Additional benefit programs that can be applied to dependents/families include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Income Support</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Adult Health Benefit</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Income Support</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Persons with Developmental Disabilities</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Veterans Affairs Canada</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Special Needs Assistance for Seniors</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Veterans Affairs Canada</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Interim Federal Health Program</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit</a></li></ul>

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### 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
<a href="#">Alberta Blue Cross Non-Group Coverage</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures access to economical supplemental health benefits</li><li>• Clients may receive partial coverage for amino acid-based infant formula (Neocate® with DHA and ARA, or Puramino A+®)</li><li>• Information on nutrition product coverage (and coverage criteria) will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li><li>• These products require special authorization; the link to the form is provided on the iDBL</li><li>• A monthly premium is charged once coverage is active</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before active coverage:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Consult social worker</li><li>◦ Client applies for Non-Group Coverage (even if already has Alberta Blue Cross Group Insurance)</li><li>◦ Can access the Nutricia bridging program (for Neocate®) or coupons from Mead Johnson (for Puramino A+®) for a waiting period (usually three months)</li></ul></li><li>• After coverage is active:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li><li>◦ The Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ensure the full name of the formula is detailed: “Neocate® infant formula with DHA and ARA” or “Puramino A+®”</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>

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

Description	Required Steps
<b><u>Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers health benefits for children in low-income households</li> <li>Benefits include coverage for prescription drugs and some over-the-counter products (including children's vitamins/minerals, prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements)</li> <li>Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li> <li>If the product requires special authorization this will be indicated on the iDBL and a link to the special authorization form will be provided</li> <li>If special authorization is not available, or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li> <li>If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber</li> <li>If a request for an exception is required, the <a href="#">Request for Health Benefit Exception form</a> is completed by the client and the <a href="#">Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form</a> is completed by the physician/medical practitioner</li> </ul>
<b><u>Child and Youth Support Program (CYS)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial and medical benefits for a child if the child's parents or guardians cannot care for the child</li> <li>Extended medical coverage is under the Alberta Child Health Benefit Program</li> <li>Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li> <li>If the product requires special authorization this will be indicated on the iDBL and a link to the special authorization form will be provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li> <li>If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps families access supports and services for a child with disabilities</li> <li>Helps with some costs for special diets, nutrition supplements, and enteral formulas</li> <li>RDs can use the FSCD Diet Costing Toolkit and Process for Completing AHS NS FSCD Letter available on Insite for AHS staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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"> <li>Requires annual renewal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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

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

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

Description	Required Steps
<b>Pediatric Home Nutrition Support Program (PHNSP)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports clients and their families to manage tube feeding at home               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Alberta: <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric</a></li> <li>Southern Alberta: <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric</a></li> <li>Note: clients residing in Red Deer can choose which program they would like to be referred to; however, it is recommended that they be referred to the region where they receive most of their health services</li> </ul> </li> <li>Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies</li> <li>Helps clients navigate funding options</li> <li>Co-payments               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Alberta: co-payment of fees for formula purchased through the program</li> <li>Southern Alberta: there is no co-payment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A referral to the program is required to access products and services               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Alberta: <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric</a></li> <li>Southern Alberta: <a href="#">Home Nutrition Support Program – Pediatric</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 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
<b><u>Alberta Adult Health Benefit (AAHB)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides health benefits to Albertans in low-income households who are pregnant or have high ongoing prescription drug needs.</li><li>Benefits include coverage for prescription drugs and some over-the-counter products (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements)</li><li>Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li><li>If the product requires special authorization this will be indicated on the iDBL and a link to the special authorization form will be provided</li><li>If special authorization is not available, or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li><li>If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber</li><li>If a request for an exception is required, the <a href="#">Request for Health Benefit Exception Committee (HBEC) form</a> is completed by the client and the <a href="#">Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form</a> is completed by the physician/medical practitioner</li></ul>
<b><u>Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program (PFAP)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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. See <a href="#">General FAQs</a>.</li><li>Eligibility<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clients require an Alberta Cancer Board Number</li><li>Be an adult Alberta resident</li><li>Eligibility is reviewed by the cancer centre social worker</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>Refer to <a href="#">brochure on social work</a> for referral information.</li></ul>



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

Description	Required Steps
<b><u>Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides financial assistance and health benefits for individuals who have a medical condition that substantially limits their ability to earn a living</li> <li>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)</li> <li>Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li> <li>If the product requires special authorization this will be indicated on the iDBL and a link to the special authorization form will be provided</li> <li>The Health Benefits Exception Committee (HBEC) makes decisions about requests for additional health benefits (see <a href="#">AISH Policy Manual</a>)</li> <li>Assists clients or their dependent children with the cost of a special diet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The benefit details and requirements for a letter of support are outlined in the <a href="#">Special Diets</a> section of the AISH Policy Manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note: some special diet types require additional documentation, such as test results</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li> <li>If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber</li> <li>If a request for additional benefits is required, the <a href="#">Request for HBEC form</a> is completed by the client and the <a href="#">Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form</a> is completed by the physician/medical practitioner</li> <li>For special diets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A letter is written by a dietitian, nurse, or physician (see <a href="#">Letter Template: Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped</a> under “Practice Support Resources”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send additional documentation, if required</li> </ul> </li> <li>The letter is given to the client or it can be sent directly to the AISH worker/AISH office the client is assigned to (see <a href="#">Contact AISH</a>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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

Description	Required Steps
<b>Home Nutrition Support Program (HNSP)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports clients in managing tube feeding at home               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li> <li><a href="#">Southern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li> <li>Note: clients residing in Red Deer can choose which program they would like to be referred to; however, it is recommended that they be referred to the region where they receive most of their health services</li> </ul> </li> <li>Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies</li> <li>Helps clients navigate funding options</li> <li>Co-payments               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Alberta: charges a monthly co-payment</li> <li>Southern Alberta: no co-payment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A referral to the program is required to access products and services               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li> <li><a href="#">Southern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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

Description	Required Steps
<b><u>Income Support (Alberta Works)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports for individuals and families to pay for basic expenses like food, clothing, and shelter</li> <li>• Those eligible for health benefits receive coverage for prescription and non-prescription drugs and nutrition products</li> <li>• Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding are eligible for prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplement coverage</li> <li>• Infant formula can be issued as a health benefit (recommended) or a special diet</li> <li>• Information on nutrition product coverage will be listed on the Alberta Blue Cross <a href="#">Interactive Drug Benefit List</a> (iDBL)</li> <li>• If the product requires special authorization this will be indicated on the iDBL and a link to the special authorization form will be provided</li> <li>• If special authorization is not available, or if special authorization is denied, consider a request for an exception</li> <li>• 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 (see “<a href="#">First Nations Clients Accessing Nutritional Supplements</a>” bottom section of Alberta Works Policy Manual)</li> <li>• Benefits are provided to eligible household units to assist with the cost of special diets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The benefit details and requirements for a letter of support are outlined in the <a href="#">Special Diets</a> section of the Alberta Works Policy Manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Note: some special diet types require additional documentation, such as test results</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain a prescription for the product (client/health professional/care provider)</li> <li>• If special authorization is required, the Drug Special Authorization Request form is completed by the prescriber</li> <li>• If a request for exception is required, the <a href="#">Request for HBEC form</a> is completed by the client and the <a href="#">Request for Prescription Drugs and Nutritional Products form</a> is completed by the physician/medical practitioner</li> <li>• For special diets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ A letter is written by a dietitian, nurse, or physician (see <a href="#">Letter Template: Income Support</a> under “Practice Support Resources”)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Send additional documentation, if required</li> <li>• 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 (see <a href="#">Alberta Supports</a> page for locations)</li> </ul>

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

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

## 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
<b><u>Alberta Cancer Foundation Patient Financial Assistance Program (PFAP)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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. See <a href="#">General FAQs</a>.</li><li>Eligibility<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clients require an Alberta Cancer Board Number</li><li>Be an adult Alberta resident</li></ul></li><li>Eligibility is reviewed by the cancer centre social worker</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li><li>Refer to <a href="#">brochure on social work</a> for referral information</li></ul>
<b><u>Home Nutrition Support Program (HNSP)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supports clients to manage tube feeding at home<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li><li><a href="#">Southern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li><li>Note: clients residing in Red Deer can choose which program they would like to be referred to; however, it is recommended that they be referred to the region where they receive the majority of their health services</li></ul></li><li>Coordinates access to formula, equipment, and supplies</li><li>Helps clients navigate funding options</li><li>Co-payments<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Northern Alberta: charges a monthly co-payment</li><li>Southern Alberta: no co-payment</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A referral to the program is required to access products and services<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Northern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li><li><a href="#">Southern Alberta Home Nutrition Support Program – Adults</a></li></ul></li></ul>

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Description	Required Steps
<u><a href="#">Special Needs Assistance for Seniors</a></u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides financial assistance for low-income seniors</li> <li>See 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"> <li>See “How to make a claim” for information on process</li> <li>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)</li> </ul> </li> <li>For special diets, see “Celiac groceries” under Eligible items (Personal supports) for details on eligibility, funding maximums, and required documents</li> <li>See “How to make a claim” for information on process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides financial assistance for low-income seniors</li> <li>See 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"> <li>See “How to make a claim” for information on process</li> <li>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)</li> </ul> </li> <li>For special diets, see “Celiac groceries” under Eligible items (Personal supports) for details on eligibility, funding maximums, and required documents</li> <li>See “How to make a claim” for information on process</li> </ul>

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

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

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



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

Description	Required Steps
<b><u>Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for First Nations and Inuit</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides eligible First Nations and Inuit clients with coverage for a range of health benefits that are not covered through other programs or plans</li> <li>Benefits include prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vitamins/minerals (including prenatal multivitamin/mineral supplements)</li> <li>Infant formula, nutrition supplements, enteral formulas, and thickening agents</li> <li>Additional nutrition products for clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with chronic renal failure</li> <li>undergoing active cancer treatment</li> <li>with a terminal illness and are near the end of life</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Information on nutrition product coverage can be found on the <a href="#">NIHB Drug benefit list</a></li> <li>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)</li> <li>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</li> <li>Products listed on the Exclusion list (e.g., megavitamins) will not be covered</li> </ul>	<p><b>Registered Prescriber (Physician or Nurse Practitioner)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>When the pharmacist receives the prescription (from the registered prescriber or client), they will contact the NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC)</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regulated Provider (RD or RN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the recommendation letter and give it to your client to bring to their pharmacy <b>or</b> send/fax it to the client's pharmacy for them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Recommendation Letter Template: <a href="#">Non-Insured Health Benefits</a> under "Practice Support Resources"</li> <li>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"</li> </ul> </li> <li>When the pharmacist receives the recommendation letter, they will contact the NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC),</li> <li>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</li> </ul>

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

Description	Required Steps
<b><u>Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for First Nations and Inuit (continued)</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The prior approval process for products requires <b>one</b> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Prescription:</b> from a registered prescriber (e.g., physician, nurse practitioner). See role-specific steps and process.</li> <li><b>Recommendation letter:</b> from a regulated provider (e.g., RD, RN). See role-specific steps and process.*</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>*Note: Given the vital role social workers play in the coordination of client care, they can submit recommendations to the client's pharmacy on behalf of registered prescribers/regulated providers. Social workers, however, cannot write recommendation letters for nutrition products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits are based on medical necessity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note: this is documented when the health professional completes the Exception or Limited Use Infant Formula or Nutritional Supplement Request form</li> </ul> </li> <li>Approvals are valid for up to 12 months and then require review/renewal.</li> <li>For more information on NIHB, see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Nutrition Policy Overview</a></li> <li><a href="#">Non-Insured Health Benefits: Answers to Common Practice Questions About Coverage for Nutrition Products</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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