



Patient Care + Research + Clinical Trials

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2018-Nov-07

### **Pharmacare deductible and insulin pumps**

The BC Pharmacare deductible is not straightforward - the deductible is subject to two thresholds: 2% & 3% of net family income. Once Pharmacare-approved expenditures exceed 2% of net family income Pharmacare covers 70% of the cost of Pharmacare-approved items. Once expenditures exceed 3% of net family income Pharmacare covers 100% of the cost of Pharmacare-approved items. Note, many very effective diabetes devices and medications ironically are not Pharmacare-approved. Insulin pumps for individuals age >25 became Pharmacare-approved 2018-August.

There are currently two insulin pumps on the Canadian market which are Pharmacare approved. These are: the Omnipod from Insulet and the Veo 630G from Medtronic. Pumps being considered by Pharmacare include the 670G from Medtronic and the Tandem T:slim X2. Click [this link](#) for an update on pump technology.

When considering insulin pumps and the Pharmacare deductible it is important to differentiate between pump hardware that is disposable & pump hardware that is not disposable.

The non-disposable part of the Omnipod, the controller, retails at \$800 - this cost is not subject to the Pharmacare deductible - this cost is covered 100% by BC Pharmacare. The non-disposable part of the Veo pump from Medtronic (the pump itself) retails at \$6600. Unlike the Omnipod pump controller this cost is still subject to the Pharmacare deductible. The \$6600 pump is a Pharmacare-approved item but it will NOT BE FREE unless you have already hit the 3% deductible. You will have to pay ALL of the cost until you hit the 2% mark; between the 2% & 3% mark you will still have to pay 30% of the cost until you hit the 3% mark.

The disposable parts of these pumps are subject to the Pharmacare deductible. These include the pods for the Omnipod system (\$300 per month) & the tubing for the Medtronic system (\$270/month). *Note the disposable continuous glucose meter that comes with the Veo pump system from Medtronic is not a Pharmacare-approved item. Thus no expenditures incurred for the CGM will go towards the Pharmacare deductible. Dr. Elliott is lobbying Pharmacare hard to get all [CGMs available in Canada](#) approved as Pharmacare-deductible eligible expenses.*

Extended medical insurance, if available, may cover the costs incurred for both insulin pumps and disposables until the 3% threshold has been reached.

Based on the above it is evident that the upfront costs of the Omnipod & Medtronic pumps may be quite different depending on whether or not the 2% & 3% thresholds have been reached. As such there may be financial implications between choosing the Omnipod and Medtronic systems.

Here is an example of for a family who net income is \$150,000 (2% = \$3000, 3% = \$4500).

As of date of purchase of Medtronic pump, let's assume Pharmacare-approved expenses are at \$1500. Remember, the pump costs \$6600. The first \$1500 for the pump comes out of the user's pocket to get the family to the 2% threshold. Of the next \$1500 required to get the family to the 3% threshold, another \$450 (30% of \$1500) also comes out of the users pocket.

So of the \$6600 for the Medtronic pump the user pays  $\$1500 + \$450 = \$1950$ . The province pays \$4650.

If an Omnipod pump is chosen upfront costs are \$0 regardless of family income. Ongoing costs are approximately \$30/month higher than with a Medtronic pump.