

Obesity in the workplace: A gap in health benefit plans

Many decision-makers don't understand that **obesity is a chronic disease that is linked to many other health conditions**.¹ As a result, benefit plans don't correctly classify obesity. This leads to inadequate access to care.

A correct classification of obesity in the workplace would reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, increase productivity, and enhance the well-being of employees.²

THE TOP CHRONIC ILLNESSES THAT DRIVE UP HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN COSTS IN CANADA³



Depression



Hypertension



Type 2 diabetes



Asthma

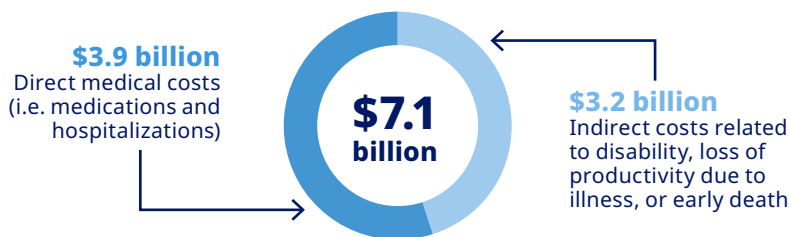


Inflammatory conditions

Obesity increases the risk for most top health benefit cost drivers in Canada⁴
13% reduction in weight can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes by 41%⁵

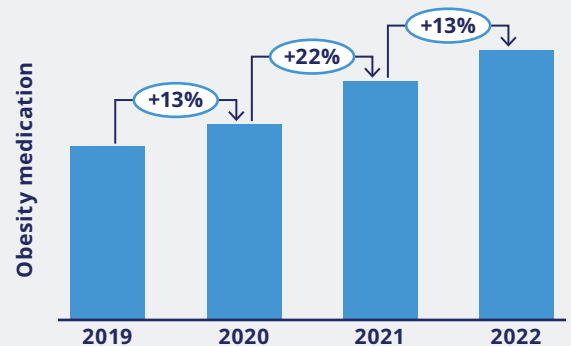
Data supports the need for obesity medication coverage in Canadian health benefit plans

Economic burden of obesity in Canada (2010)⁶



- A growing number of Canadians require obesity medication
- Yet, many Canadians with private drug insurance are still without access to obesity medication through their benefit plans⁸

Private plan case example:⁷ Total Prescriptions growth rate



Total prescription rate for obesity medication is growing by **more than 10% annually**

Improving obesity medication coverage is an investment in Canadians who need it most – and the economy



Obesity is the leading risk factor for type 2 diabetes⁹

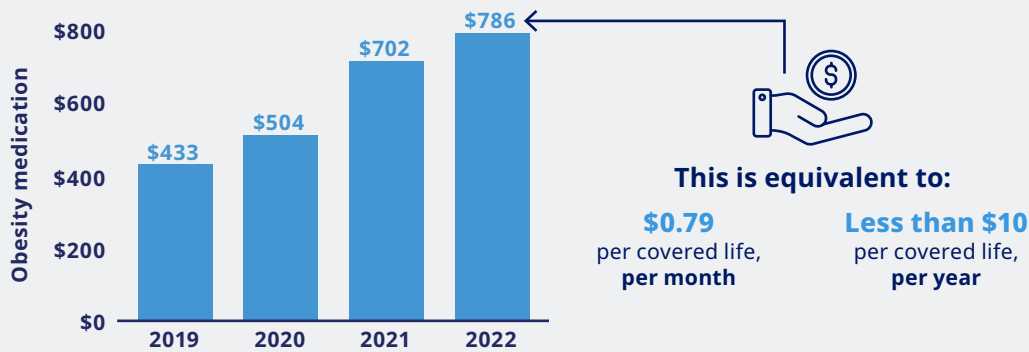
Type 2 diabetes costs employers approximately **\$412 due to reduced productivity** and **\$1,042 due to missed work** per employee with type 2 diabetes mellitus per year.¹⁰



Obesity is more than weight – it can also affect mental health¹¹

The cost of mental illnesses, directly related to workplace losses, is estimated at **\$6.4 billion annually**.¹²

Average monthly obesity medication cost per 1,000 covered lives⁷



The cost of covering obesity medication is not significant in comparison to the cost of illness from obesity-associated co-morbidities.

HOW TO INCLUDE OBESITY MANAGEMENT IN BENEFIT PLANS

What can you do to support those living with obesity in the workplace?

Ensure employees have evidence-based supports that align with the **Canadian Adult Obesity Clinical Practice Guidelines**:¹³



MEDICATIONS

For weight loss and to help maintain weight loss

Coverage of obesity medications, with reasonable limits



MEDICAL NUTRITION THERAPY

Personalized counselling by a registered dietitian with a focus on healthy food choices and evidence-based nutrition therapy

Coverage of dietitian/nutritionist



EXERCISE

30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity most days of the week

Coverage of exercise health support professional (i.e. kinesiologist)



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Cognitive approach to behavioural change; psychotherapy if appropriate

Coverage of psychologist/cognitive behavioural therapy, including iCBT*



BIARIATRIC SURGERY

Surgeon-patient discussion

Adequate leave policies and return to work accommodations

*Internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy

To learn more about how to support employees living with obesity in the workplace, please contact Novo Nordisk Canada Inc. at NNCICustomerCare@novonordisk.com

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