

Get Help with Travel for Medical Care

A Guide to the Medical Transportation Benefit

For many First Nations people living in rural or remote areas, it can be challenging to access necessary medical care. The Nisga'a Health Benefits (NHB) program offers help through the medical transportation (MT) benefit.

The MT benefit is part of the Nisga'a Health Benefits program, delivered by the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority. Staff in our office are your connections to help you access your benefits.

Nisga'a citizens living in Terrace, Prince Rupert, or Vancouver can contact a Nisga'a Benefit Liaison for additional help accessing health benefits in these urban centres.

What My Plan Covers

Your MT benefits provide funding to help you travel for medical services not available in your local area. MT coverage assists with transportation and also can help with accommodation and meals, depending on how long your trip is. It is intended as a supplementary benefit and may not cover all your travel costs.

You can access medical transportation benefits if you are traveling for:

- Medical services covered by the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) or a public health agency.
- Services covered by the Health Benefits Program (e.g., dental, vision, etc.).
- Traditional healers.
- Treatment at a facility for drug and alcohol addiction.

MT benefits cover travel to the closest appropriate provider, using the most efficient and economical type of transportation for your needs and medical condition.

Escorts

If you need someone to accompany you during medical travel, some of your escort's travel costs may be covered.

Escort's costs are eligible under certain conditions, including if you:

- Are a minor.
- Require help with activities of daily living (e.g., dressing, eating, or bathing).
- Are undergoing a medical procedure (e.g., day surgery) or have a medical condition that means you need help to get home.
- Will face a language barrier.
- Are travelling for prenatal care.

Coverage Rates

MT benefits may provide funding for accommodation, meals, and travel based on the following rates:

- Mileage rate for personal vehicles: 53¢/km.
- Non-commercial accommodation, i.e., Jean C. Barber Lodge, Easter Seals.
- Commercial accommodation at the most economical rate.
- Accommodation in private homes: \$90 per night, up to a maximum of \$450 per week.
- Meals:
 - Breakfast: \$20.00
 - Lunch: \$25.00
 - Dinner: \$30
 - Full day, when travel extends overnight: \$75.00
 - Weekly, when travelling more than six days: \$260.00
 - Special diet, on exception approval: \$300.00

How Do I Access Coverage?

The NVHA provides personalized service and support tailored to your situation. We walk you through the process each step of the way.

To access this benefit:

- If you live in the Nass Valley, contact the main NVHA office:
250-633-5030
nisgaabenefits@nisgaahealth.bc.ca
- If you live outside the Nass Valley:
877-773-5030
nisgaabenefits@nisgaahealth.bc.ca
- If you live in Vancouver, Terrace, or Prince Rupert, you can also contact a Nisga'a Benefit Liaison:
Terrace: nhbgitlaxdax@nisgaahealth.bc.ca
Prince Rupert: nhbgitmaxmakay@nisgaahealth.bc.ca
Vancouver: nhbtsamiks@nisgaahealth.bc.ca

Please have your appointment confirmation and any supporting documents with you when you call.

What My Plan Does Not Cover

Some types of travel are excluded. Exclusions cannot be appealed and no exceptions are made.

MT benefit exclusions include, but are not limited to:

- Compassionate travel (e.g., travelling to visit a family member who is receiving medical treatment).
- Payment of fees for a doctor's note.
- Travel back to your community of residence if you became sick or injured while away from home.
- Travel when the medically necessary service is available in your community.
- Travel to access medical appointments located outside Canada.
- Travel to access services that are not considered medically necessary.
- Travel where the only purpose is to pick up items that do not need to be fitted (e.g., prescriptions, prescription glasses or contacts, and some medical supplies and equipment).

If you have any questions about your medical transportation benefits, how to access coverage, or why a claim was denied, call Nisga'a Health Benefits at 250-633-5030 or, if you live outside the Nass Valley, 877-773-5030.



**Nisga'a Valley
Health Authority**