

Pillcheck Guide for Disability Case Managers

Eligibility - Who benefits most from Pillcheck?

Best candidates are claimants with:

- **Depression, anxiety, or PTSD**, especially if one of these signs is also present:
 - Medications are not working well or causing unwanted side effects
 - Switching medications or having dosage adjustments
 - Prescribed several medications
 - Fearful of taking medications due to risk of side effects or complications
- **Pain** as primary reason for disability
- **Recent diagnosis of heart disease/stroke** (depression affects more than a third of survivors).

Pillcheck may clinically benefit, but it may not significantly reduce duration of disability for:

- Planned surgery (may require pain meds)
- Cancer patients (depression, nausea and pain management)
- Bipolar and schizophrenia (frequently use other psychiatric medications)
- Autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, thyroid disease, psoriasis (frequently use antidepressants and pain medication)

Note: Pillcheck is NOT a good fit for people who have received a liver transplant (the liver donor's genes are different)

When is the best time to use Pillcheck?

- Highest impact when Pillcheck is on hand for appointments with physicians to inform prescribing with the individual's genetics in mind.
- In general, the sooner Pillcheck can be used to support recovery, the lower the risk of treatment failure, unwanted side effects, and non-adherence.
- When offered later in disability, Pillcheck can explain previous treatment failures and provide clarity for treatment decisions going forward.

Introductory Script

There's a medication optimization service, called Pillcheck, that may be of help to you. It provides you with information on how you will respond to prescription drugs you're taking now and ones you may need in the future. It can assist you and your doctor in finding safe, effective treatment for you. It only takes a few minutes of your time at home to do the simple test. Are you interested to hear more about the service?

More about Pillcheck

Everybody responds to medications differently. A prescription that works well for one person, may not work, or may cause harmful side effects for another person.

Pillcheck is a genetic testing service that **predicts** how effectively many prescription medications will work with your body -- helping you and your doctor to learn which medications will be **most effective** and have the **lowest risk of side effects for you**. Knowing this information can help get you feeling better and support your recovery!

The genetic test is LIMITED to a few genes:

- The test does NOT assess ancestry, disease risk or disease diagnosis. Pillcheck analyzes only genes involved in your metabolism of medications.
- Your DNA sample is destroyed after your report is complete.

The Pillcheck service includes:

- a genetic test, using a simple cheek swab kit that gets mailed to your home
- a personalized report of your predicted response to medications for a wide variety of conditions, including: **depression, anxiety, pain, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal**, and more
- a pharmacist's letter summarizing the results for your doctor
- a secure, online account to access your own results for as long as you want

You don't have to be taking any medications for the test to work. It just predicts how your body will respond to them based on your genetics.

Since your DNA doesn't change, Pillcheck results are good for a lifetime and can be used now and in the future as your health and medication needs change.

It takes about 2-3 weeks to get your results.

Your DNA, Your Results

- Your participation is completely voluntary and will not impact insurance or coverage decisions.
- A summary of your results will be shared with your doctor and with me as your case manager for the purpose of optimizing your treatment plan.
- <disability provider> will not have access to your full Pillcheck Report with genetic data. I will only have access to your summary letter.
- Outside of this, your results are NOT shared with anyone without your consent.

Benefits of the Pillcheck service include:

- Finding the right medication for you, in the right dosage, so you feel better, faster
- Less chance of adverse side effects
- Peace of mind knowing that your medication is correct for you
- Good for now...good for later – use your results for any future medications you may need

Questions Frequently Asked by Clients

Claimants can read more information at <https://www.pillcheck.ca>

Additional FAQs outlined below.

1-pager brochure can be forwarded by email.

What is Pharmacogenetics?

- Pharmacogenetics is the study of how a person's genes (DNA) affect his/her responses to medications. For example: Can you drink coffee at night and then go to sleep on time? Some people can, for others, the coffee keeps them awake a long time. Similarly, a medication that works well for some people may not work for others due to differences in their DNA. Just as genes determine eye and hair colour, or how your body handles caffeine, genes also affect how you respond to medications.
- More than 95% of people have at least one genetic variation affecting drug response

- This can range from a lack of drug efficacy to severe, or sometimes fatal adverse drug reactions.

What is Pillcheck?

- Pillcheck is a pharmacogenetic service that analyzes your DNA to identify differences in your genes that are known to affect drug response
- Pillcheck can identify your predicted response to 201 commonly prescribed medications

What medications are covered?

You can check if a certain medication is included in the Pillcheck Report by using this search tool: <https://order.pillcheck.ca/pages/med-check>. Even if a medication is not clearly listed in the Pillcheck Report, the Pillcheck pharmacist may recommend adjustments to your medication regimen based on his/her professional judgement.

How does the process work?

- Pillcheck is easy to do and painless.
- After I place your order, you'll receive an email asking you to provide your consent, verify your own Pillcheck access account, and create a password.
- List your medical conditions and medications in the online form in your Pillcheck account.
- In the next 3-4 days, you will receive the Pillcheck kit containing a cheek swab, instructions, and a pre-paid return envelope.
- Within 2 weeks of mailing your sample to the lab, your Pillcheck Report and a Pharmacist's Letter will be ready for download in your Pillcheck Account. You will be emailed when they are complete.
- You can then provide the letter and relevant pages of the report to your healthcare practitioner.

Why is a letter from a PGx-trained pharmacist included?

- This specially-trained pharmacist will write a 2-3 page letter summarizing your Pillcheck results for your doctor(s).
- So any doctor you might see has access to concise and informative recommendations and specific insights on the way your body processes medications.
- For the pharmacist to review your current medications, **please complete your Online Medication Form**, located in your Pillcheck Account.

Does Pillcheck affect insurability?

- No, Pillcheck will not affect your disability, life, or health insurance as Pillcheck does not screen for disease risk
- Furthermore, **Bill S-201** passed in 2017, making **genetic discrimination illegal in Canada**. You can read more about the bill at: <https://openparliament.ca/bills/42-1/S-201/>
- You completely own your genetic data and have control over who can have access to your Pillcheck Report.

Has Pillcheck been reviewed by Health Canada?

- Pillcheck has been reviewed by Health Canada.
- Pillcheck is conducted by a licensed laboratory, Dynacare, in the same way as many other Laboratory Developed Tests.
- The Pillcheck Report references clinical pharmacogenetic guidelines provided by [Health Canada](#), the U.S. [FDA](#), and the [Clinical Pharmacogenetics Implementation Consortium \(CPIC\)](#).