

Canada to make contraception for women free

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Canada will cover the full cost of contraception for women, the government said Saturday as it highlighted the first part of a major health care reform.

The government will pay for the most widely used methods to avoid pregnancy, such as IUDs, contraceptive pills, hormonal implants or the day after pill, for the nine million Canadian [women](#) of reproductive age, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said at a press conference in a pharmacy in Toronto.

"Women should be free to choose the contraceptives they need without cost getting in the way. So, we're making contraceptives free," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on X, formerly Twitter.

This announcement fleshes out the first part of a bill unveiled in February that, once completed, would mark the biggest expansion of Canada's publicly funded [health care](#) system in decades.

This new regime will also cover the cost of diabetes medication for some 3.7 million Canadians.

The cost of the new system and timing of the launch have not been announced.

More drugs will be added to the program as it is rolled out over the coming years.

A recent OECD report using 2021 data found Canada spends more per capita on medications than all but three member countries—Japan, Germany and the United States.

The government must now win the approval of Canada's provinces, which actually administer health care, for this new system. Alberta and Quebec have already said they would opt out.

The pharmacare plan—as it is called locally—follows protracted negotiations between Trudeau's Liberal minority government and a small

leftist faction in parliament.

The New Democratic Party agreed to prop up the Liberals until the fall of 2025, on the condition that the government immediately launch the drug program.

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