Cataract Surgery

Foldable Intraocular Lens Covered by U of M Supplementary Health Plan.

Manitoba Health pays for a non-foldable type of intraocular lens (IOL) in cataract surgery. A foldable IOL, the type of replacement lens which is recommended by ophthalmologists, is not covered by our provincial health insurance. The cost of a foldable IOL (currently $300) must be borne by the patient. According to information received from Great-West Life, the U of M's Supplementary Health Plan will reimburse 80 percent of the cost of a foldable IOL. There is a restriction that one can make only one claim for a foldable IOL per eye in a lifetime.

In addition, the Supplementary Health Plan for retirees covers one (1) pair of eyeglasses after cataract surgery. For full-time retirees, the coverage is 80% up to $500 of expense, and 100% thereafter. For part-time retirees, the coverage is 55% up to $500 of expense, and 70% thereafter.

If you wish to make a claim for a foldable IOL, or post-cataract surgery eyeglasses*, the "Healthcare Expenses Statement" is available from Human Resources.

*Some retirees have had their eyeglasses claim initially rejected by Great-West Life on the grounds that the Supplementary Health Plan for retirees does not cover “eye care.” To improve the chances of getting a claim approved quickly, it is very important to state in the column “Nature of Illness” on the Healthcare Expenses Statement, that eyeglasses are required because of cataract surgery. In order to expedite the processing of your claim, prior to sending in your Health Expenses Statement, it is strongly recommended that you contact Great-West Life and ask what they want as proof that your eyeglasses are needed because of cataract surgery. For example, in some cases, evidence of reimbursement for IOLs has been sufficient. However, in other cases, Great-West Life has required a letter from the eye surgeon.

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