



INTERIM MEDICAL POLICY

Date Reviewed: 2/25/00, 4/19/00, 5/5/00, 6/17/03, 04/30/2009

Subject: Tamiflu (oseltamivir), Relenza (zanamivir)

Description: These antiviral drugs are inhibitors of influenza virus neuraminidase affecting release of viral particles. In clinical trials, there was a 1.3 to 1.5 day reduction in the median time to improvement in influenza-infected subjects receiving these drugs compared to subjects receiving placebo.

Indications of Coverage:

Tamiflu or Relenza is considered medically necessary when one of the following is documented:

The individual has a confirmed, probable, or suspected case of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, amantadine (Symmetrel), and rimantadine (Flumadine) and has at least one of the following risk factors:

The individual has a certain chronic medical conditions (see examples below)

The individual is 65 years of age or older

The individual is five years of age or younger

The individual is pregnant

The individual has had exposure to an individual with a confirmed or probable case of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, amantadine, and rimantadine and has at least one of the following risk factors:

The individual has a certain chronic medical conditions (see examples below)

The individual is 65 years of age or older

The individual is five years of age or younger

The individual is pregnant

The individual has had exposure to an individual with a confirmed, suspected, or probable case, or has a confirmed, probable, or suspected case, of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, amantadine, and rimantadine and is a household member or caregiver of a person who is at high-risk for complications of influenza.

The individual is a health care worker who has been or will be exposed to a confirmed or probable case of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, amantadine, and rimantadine.

Some examples of the chronic medical conditions that may place the individual at risk (this is not an all inclusive list): HIV, immunosuppression due to the use of drugs used for transplant or chemotherapy, chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma, COPD, or cystic fibrosis, chronic renal disease, diabetes mellitus, neurological disorders which may compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions.

Limitations of Coverage:

Review contract and endorsements for exclusions and prior authorization or benefit requirements.

If used for a condition/diagnosis other than is listed in the Indications of Coverage, deny as experimental or investigative.

If used for a condition/diagnosis that is listed in the Indications of Coverage, but the criteria are not met, deny as not medically necessary.

Documentation required:

Office notes, when relevant

Rationale: These antiviral drugs are used in the treatment of acute illness due to influenza infection in individuals one year and older who have been symptomatic for no more than two days. The Centers for Disease Control has also recommended the use of these drugs after exposure for certain individuals who have risk factors for complications related to influenza.

References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Interim Guidance On Antiviral Recommendations For Patients With Confirmed Or Suspected Swine Influenza A Virus Infection And Close Contacts. Available at: www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm. Accessed: 30 Apr 09.

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Orzeck EA, Shi N, Blumentals WA. Oseltamivir and the risk of influenza-related complications and hospitalizations in patients with diabetes. *Clin Ther.* 2007 Oct; 29(10): 2246-55.

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Approved by the Medical Director