

## INTERIM MEDICAL POLICY

Date Reviewed: 04/30/2009

Subject: Tamiflu (Oseltamivir), Relenza (zanamivir)

Codes: J8499

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 all of the following criteria are met:

A. The member has a confirmed, probable, or suspected case of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, Symmetrel (amantadine) and Flumadine (rimantadine) and is at risk according to the criteria listed below.

OR

B. The member has had exposure to an individual with a confirmed or probable case of influenza resistant to the adamantane antiviral medications, amantadine and rimantadine and is at risk according to the criteria listed below.

OR

C. The member 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.

OR

D. The member 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.

Risk factors:

Persons with certain chronic medical conditions

Persons 65 or older

Children younger than 5 years old

Pregnant women

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 for 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 patients 1 year and older who have been symptomatic for no more than 2 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. Interim Guidance On Antiviral Recommendations For Patients With Confirmed Or Suspected Swine Influenza A Virus Infection And Close

Contacts. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/recommendations.htm>. Accessed 04/30/2009.

Centers For Disease Control. Prevention and Control of Influenza. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2008. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr57e717a1.htm>. Accessed 04/30/2009.

McGeer A, Green KA, Plevneshi A, et al. Antiviral therapy and outcomes of influenza requiring hospitalization in Ontario, Canada. *Clin Infect Dis* 2007;45:1568--75.

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.

Peters PH, Moscona A, Schulman KL, Barr CE. Study of the impact of oseltamivir on the risk for pneumonia and other outcomes of influenza, 2000-2005. *Medscape J Med*. 2008 Jun 4;10(6):131

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