

Pharmacy Passages

is a quarterly newsletter for our customers. Pharmacy Passages will update you on changes to the Preferred Products List. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee meets quarterly to evaluate product status and new prescription products approved by the FDA. The P&T Committee is comprised of independent physicians and pharmacists.

Your quarterly update

Vioxx Withdrawn from the Market – Now What?

The voluntary withdrawal of Vioxx from the market on September 30th has been well publicized. We know now that a long-term study of Vioxx found an increased risk of serious cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and strokes, among study patients taking Vioxx when compared to patients receiving placebo.

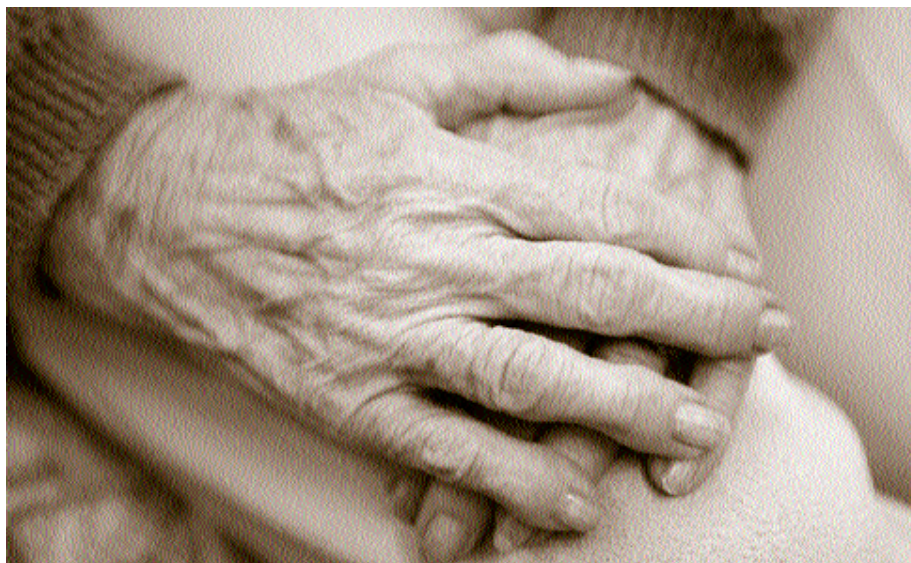
So what is the advice for people who may have been taking Vioxx? First, be assured that the absolute risk for any individual person is very low. For someone who had been using Vioxx without problems it is not expected that any lasting effects will occur as a result of treatment. People with a continued need for medication to treat arthritis pain should plan to speak with their physician about alternatives. Otherwise, there may not be a need for any diagnostic testing or medical follow-up.

It's important to remember that despite the fanfare and advertisements surrounding other COX-2 anti-inflammatory drugs like Celebrex and Bextra, these medications do

not offer any effectiveness advantage over older anti-inflammatory medications. So, if the patient has never exhibited risk for stomach bleeding a generic drug like ibuprofen might be appropriate. Many patients may not even require an anti-inflammatory medication and will obtain adequate pain relief from plain Tylenol (acetaminophen) instead.

Innoviant's preferred product list includes a range of generic alternatives to Vioxx for members without gastrointestinal risk factors for bleeding. In addition, the COX-2 medications are available through the RxInstep program for our members who may require the use of one of these agents.

Additional information on Merck's withdrawal of Vioxx may be found at www.vioxx.com. Innoviant has also developed several communication pieces regarding the withdrawal of Vioxx and its effects on members. This information can be found at www.innoviant.com



Product Reviews

Product	Indications	Standard Plan	Select Plan	Closed Plan
Cymbalta	Cymbalta (in a limited category) is indicated for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD). Cymbalta is also indicated for treatment of neuropathic pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy.	Brand co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay
Sanctura	Sanctura is indicated for the treatment of overactive bladder with symptoms of urge urinary incontinence, urgency and urinary frequency (in a limited category).	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred copay	Not Covered
Luveris	Luveris, when concomitantly administered with Gonal-F (follitropin alfa) is indicated for stimulation of follicular development in infertile hypogonadotropic hypogonadal women with profound LH deficiency.	If customer has the Specialty Pharmacy Program (SPP), this product is available through the specialty pharmacy network. Coverage and pharmacy provider(s) will be determined by the benefit design selected by the plan sponsor. Subject to Prior Authorization.	If customer has the Specialty Pharmacy Program (SPP), this product is available through the specialty pharmacy network. Coverage and pharmacy provider(s) will be determined by the benefit design selected by the plan sponsor. Subject to Prior Authorization.	If customer has the Specialty Pharmacy Program (SPP), this product is available through the specialty pharmacy network. Coverage and pharmacy provider(s) will be determined by the benefit design selected by the plan sponsor. Subject to Prior Authorization.
QVAR, Pulmicort, Aerobid, Aerobid-M, Flovent, Azmacort	Full class review of inhaled steroids (in a limited category). Added QVAR and Pulmicort to preferred status.	Brand co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay
Relenza, Tamiflu	Full class review of Anti-Influenza agents for the treatment of influenza (not in a limited category).	Brand co-pay (quantity limits of one treatment per year apply)	Third tier non-preferred co-pay (quantity limits of one treatment per year apply)	Not covered
clozapine	Annual review of prior authorization criteria for clozapine and Geodon (not in a limited category). No changes made.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then generic co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then generic co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then generic co-pay.
Geodon	Annual review of prior authorization criteria for clozapine and Geodon (not in a limited category). No changes made.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.

Products being added to preferred status were effective November 1, 2004. Products being removed from preferred status were effective November 1, 2004, unless otherwise noted. Members currently using a product designated to be removed from preferred status will receive advanced notice of the change and will not be impacted with higher co-pay until February 1, 2005, unless otherwise noted.

Product Reviews

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Zelnorm	Prior authorization criteria reviewed and updated to include coverage for diagnosis of chronic idiopathic constipation (not in a limited category).	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.
Zetia	Annual review of step-therapy criteria for Zetia (in a limited category). No changes made.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.
Panretin	Annual review of prior authorization criteria for Panretin (not in a limited category). No change made.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.
Xyrem	Annual review of prior authorization criteria for Xyrem (not in a limited category). No changes made.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.
Provigil	Prior authorization criteria for Provigil reviewed and updated to include treatment of MS associated fatigue (not in a limited category).	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then brand co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.	Subject to Prior Authorization. If approved, then second tier preferred co-pay.
Fortamet	New brand name medication (in a limited category) of an existing anti-diabetic agent (metformin). This medication is being added to preferred status because it represents a net cost similar to the generic.	Brand co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay
Caduet	New formulation of a lipotropic (in a limited category) now available as a combination agent with calcium channel blocker.	Brand co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay
Cardizem LA	Existing calcium channel blocker (in a limited category). Discussion deferred.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not covered
Menest	Existing estrogenic agent (in a limited category). This medication is being added to preferred status.	Brand co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay	Second tier preferred co-pay

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Glucovance	Existing anti-diabetic agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, glyburide/metformin, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not covered
omeprazole	Existing gastrointestinal agent (in a limited category). Previously this medication was blocked from coverage due to cost. This medication is being added to generic status.	Generic co-pay	Generic co-pay	Generic co-pay
Ziac	Existing combination anti-hypertensive agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, bisoprolol/HCTZ, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
MS Contin	Existing narcotic analgesic agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, morphine sulfate, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
Fiorinal	Existing combination narcotic analgesic agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, butalbital/aspirin/caffeine, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
Atrovent spray	Existing intranasal allergy agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, ipratropium, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
Macrobid	Existing antibiotic agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, nitrofurantoin, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered

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Product Reviews

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Flumadine	Existing antiviral agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, rimantidine, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
Lopressor HCT	Existing beta blocker agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, metoprolol/HCTZ, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered
Wellbutrin SR	Existing antidepressant agent that now has a generic available (in a limited category). This medication is being removed from preferred status because the generic equivalent, bupropion SA, is available at the generic copay.	Brand co-pay	Third tier non-preferred co-pay	Not Covered

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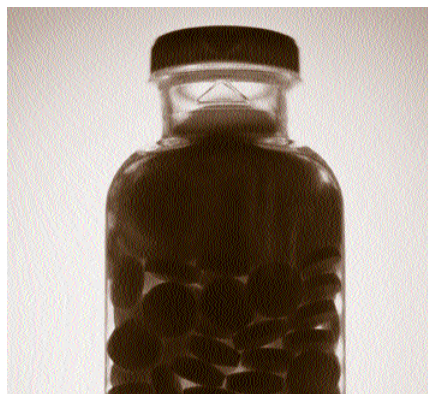
Preventing Antibiotic Resistance

Common illnesses caused by viruses include coughs, colds and flu (influenza). Despite the fact that antibiotics are powerful medications they cannot kill viruses. And because unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful, it is important for everyone to understand why doctors are now more careful than ever when prescribing these medications.

Drug-resistant bacteria

When one takes an antibiotic, bacteria are killed. However, some bacteria may survive because they have gained the ability to resist the killing effect of that antibiotic. Resistant bacteria do not respond to the antibiotics and continue to cause infection.

Each time you take an antibiotic unnecessarily or improperly, you increase your chance of developing drug-resistant bacteria. So it is really important to take



antibiotics only when necessary. Because of these resistant bacteria, some diseases that used to be easy to treat are now becoming nearly impossible to treat.

What do you need to understand about antibiotics?

- Remember that antibiotics don't work against colds and flu which are caused by viruses, and that unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful.

- Talk to your health care provider about antibiotics and find out about the differences between viruses and bacteria and when antibiotics should and shouldn't be used.
- If you do get an antibiotic, be sure to take it exactly as prescribed to help decrease the development of resistant bacteria.
- Antibiotic resistance is particularly dangerous for children, but it can occur in adults as well.

Patients should not come to expect to take antibiotics every time they're sick. If patients use antibiotics appropriately they can avoid developing the dangerous resistant bacteria that don't respond to antibiotics.

Managing Influenza at a Time of Vaccine Shortage

The best way to prevent the flu is to receive an annual flu shot.

Unfortunately, as we have learned this year, about half the nation's flu vaccine will be unavailable because one manufacturer's supply was deemed unusable. Even with the loss of millions of doses, it is expected that 55 million doses of vaccine will be available for US citizens. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this quantity is expected to be adequate to immunize our most at-risk citizens.

Because less vaccine is available this year, only those people at high risk for complications of influenza are recommended to receive the flu shot (unless additional supplies become available). Those people considered at high risk include the following:

- People 65 years of age and older
- Children ages 6 months to 23 months
- Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic lung or heart disorders including heart disease and asthma
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes), kidney diseases, blood disorders (such as sickle cell anemia), or weakened immune systems, including persons with HIV/AIDS
- Children and teenagers, 6 months to 18 years of age, who take aspirin daily
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities
- Household members and out-of-home caregivers of infants under the age of 6 months (Children under the age of 6 months cannot be vaccinated.)
- Healthcare workers who provide direct, hands-on care to patients

With the shortage of injectable vaccine, there may be greater interest in FluMist. FluMist is an inhaled preparation of live influenza virus. Because it is a live virus, it is intended only to be used by healthy people, aged 5-49 years. FluMist is generally not an acceptable substitute for an annual flu shot.

Keep in mind that vaccines of any type (including the influenza vaccine and FluMist) are typically not included in the pharmacy benefit. Vaccines are typically covered by the medical benefit and therefore not reimbursed and covered by the prescription drug benefit.

Medications for Influenza Treatment and Prevention

In contrast to vaccines which work by stimulating the body to produce an immune response, there are four prescription medications that can be used to treat or prevent influenza. These are amantadine and rimantadine (both available as generics), Relenza (zanamivir) and Tamiflu (oseltamivir). There are no generics for Relenza and Tamiflu.

Tamiflu, amantadine and rimantadine are all available in oral dosage forms. These medications may be taken for treatment and prevention. Relenza, a dry powder inhalation, is FDA approved only as a treatment for patients newly diagnosed with influenza.

As treatments for influenza, any of these medications need to be taken within 48 hours after symptoms start. On average, if people start taking an anti-influenza medication within 48 hours, they may feel symptom relief about one day sooner than if they hadn't taken medication. The usual course of treatment is five days.

Unfortunately, there is no good evidence that serious complications of flu will be prevented by taking one of these medications. Side effects differ by individual product, but may include nausea, vomiting, dizziness and headache. Relenza, the inhaled medication, may cause bronchial constriction and should not be taken by people with respiratory illnesses. It is important to understand that these medications will do nothing for other viral illness, like the common cold. Since it is difficult to correctly diagnosis influenza based on symptoms alone

physicians may require an office visit and lab test to confirm influenza before prescribing one of these medications.

There are two situations when these drugs are considered for influenza prevention;

1. During an outbreak of influenza within an institution, home or community.
2. For people who have close contact with high-risk individuals.

Take note: these medications are not recommended as alternatives to receiving vaccine, and even during this year of vaccine shortage they have not been recommended for routine use in preventing flu in healthy people outside of the two situations outlined above.

In keeping with the approved uses of anti-influenza medications, Innoviant manages quantity limits for these agents. One course of treatment per patient is allowed every year for Tamiflu (10 doses) and Relenza (20 doses). This quantity is sufficient to treat a case of influenza and is generally sufficient for a course of prevention within the home.

What Else May be done to Prevent the Flu and its Complications?

To help stop the spread of germs, people should simply follow common sense advice such as covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, staying home when sick to avoid spreading virus to others, and frequently washing hands with soap and water.

Disease caused by a bacteria called pneumococcus is a common complication of influenza. A pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for all people older than 65 years of age, and certain others who are at high risk for pneumococcal disease due to underlying health conditions. There is not a shortage of pneumococcal vaccine. The elderly and high risk population should take steps to ensure they are immunized against pneumococcal disease.

FDA Strengthens Warnings on Antidepressants

In the second quarter 2004 edition of Pharmacy Passages we reported that in March 2004, the US Food and Drug Administration issued warnings for physicians and their pediatric and adolescent patients taking common antidepressant drugs. Since then, the FDA added a “Black Box” warning, the strongest safety advisory applied to prescription medications. Prescribing information alerts physicians, patients and their caregivers to be vigilant to the onset of suicidal thoughts and actions, especially just after beginning therapy or after dosage increases. To supplement the warnings, the FDA will work with manufacturers to ensure patients receive a “MedGuide” (written information) with each prescription and refill.

The basis for these warnings is evidence obtained from pediatric studies that indicate an increased risk of suicidal thoughts shortly after initiating antidepressant treatment. It should be noted that there were no completed suicides during clinical studies of these drugs. Furthermore, it has not yet been determined whether the drugs themselves contribute to the risk or whether suicidal thoughts were a manifestation of the illness itself.

Depression is a common illness, which is often effectively treated with anti-depressant medication. Many people use antidepressants with success, but in light of the warning for increased risk of suicidal thoughts while using these drugs, the advice we provided earlier this year is worth repeating:

- Patients should never stop taking an antidepressant drug on their own.
- Worsening symptoms of depression, including suicidal thoughts, should be reported to the physician immediately.
- Frequent follow-up with a physician is required for patients starting antidepressants and after dose changes are made.

It’s important to understand that this advice applies to all newer antidepressants. We realize that individuals respond quite differently to antidepressants. For that reason the Innoviant preferred product list includes a broad range of medications including both generic and brand name antidepressants. The choices available to our members will allow for the greatest possibility of an effective treatment while avoiding bothersome and potentially dangerous side effects.

Coming in January 2005 – Expanded Customer Service Center Hours

In a continuing effort to provide our members with better service, we are introducing extended customer service center hours including evening and weekend coverage. Effective January 2005, our new hours will be:

Monday – Friday 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. (CST)
Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (CST)
Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. (CST)



Fourth Quarter

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