



June 9, 2009

Dear Physician,

Caterpillar continually reviews prescription drug coverage in an effort to promote cost-effective drug therapy. Caterpillar has recently reviewed the drug class of non-sedating antihistamines, sometimes referred to as second-generation antihistamines, commonly used to treat allergies, allergic rhinitis or hives.

Drugs in this class include over the counter (OTC) alternatives Zyrtec and Claritin, both available without a prescription. Prescription-only drugs in this class include fexofenadine (and its brand equivalent Allegra), Clarinex, and Xyzal. Since Zyrtec and Claritin are available OTC, they are generally more cost effective than the brand prescription choices.

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, in its recent review on rhinitis, concluded there is no consistent difference in the effectiveness of the non-sedating antihistamines. No drug in this class has proven superior in regards to efficacy. However, evidence shows that fexofenadine and its brand equivalent Allegra, both still available by prescription only, have the lowest risk of sedation.

In addition, the prescription antihistamines Clarinex (the primary active metabolite of Claritin) and Xyzal (an enantiomer of Zyrtec) have not shown to be more effective than their OTC counterparts, Claritin and Zyrtec, respectively. Furthermore, the decongestant component of many "D" versions is available OTC by itself and in combination with various antihistamines.

As a result of the recent review, **beginning August 1, 2009, Allegra D, Clarinex, Clarinex D, and Xyzal will no longer be covered.** Caterpillar will continue to cover fexofenadine and its brand equivalent Allegra.

In the past we have removed brand name drugs from coverage because they have a generic equivalent that members can use. Now that more drugs are becoming available OTC, we have also taken this into consideration as we review drug classes. In this instance we are removing coverage for these drugs because a substantially equivalent OTC alternative is available and can be obtained by members without a prescription. We encourage you to discuss the following possible alternatives with your patients.

Possible alternatives

OTC alternatives to Clarinex and Xyzal include Claritin and Zyrtec. Fexofenadine by itself is a prescription alternative that remains covered under the prescription drug benefit. Pseudoephedrine is available OTC by itself and in combination with various antihistamines. Consider discussing prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) alternatives to current therapy with your Caterpillar patients prior to August 1, 2009.

Antihistamine	Coverage beginning August 1, 2009	Notes
Clarinet	No longer covered 8/1/09	An OTC* alternative is Claritin (loratadine)
Clarinet D	No longer covered 8/1/09	An OTC* alternative is Claritin D (loratadine/pseudoephedrine)
Claritin (loratadine)	Not covered	Available OTC*
Allegra (fexofenadine)	Covered (generic step therapy applies)	Requires a prescription
Allegra D (fexofenadine and pseudoephedrine)	Not covered	Fexofenadine (requires a prescription) together with a non-prescription decongestant (pseudoephedrine)
Zyrtec (cetirizine)	Not covered	Available OTC*
Xyzal	No longer covered 8/1/09	An OTC* alternative is Zyrtec (cetirizine)

*OTC = over-the-counter (available without a prescription)

Caterpillar is committed to developing coverage policies based on current published evidence. We will continue to keep participants and their healthcare providers informed of more cost-effective ways to use medications. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

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