**Clinical Policy: Ondansetron (Zuplenz)**

**Reference Number:** CP.PMN.45  
**Effective Date:** 09.01.06  
**Last Review Date:** 02.19  
**Line of Business:** Medicaid

*Revision Log*

See **Important Reminder** at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

**Description**

Ondansetron (Zuplenz®) is a serotonin (5-HT3) receptor antagonist.

**FDA Approved Indication(s)**

Zuplenz is indicated for:

- Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with highly emetogenic cancer chemotherapy, including cisplatin greater than or equal to 50 mg/m²
- Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with initial and repeat courses of moderately emetogenic cancer chemotherapy
- Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with radiotherapy in patients receiving either total body irradiation, single high-dose fraction to the abdomen, or daily fractions to the abdomen
- Prevention of postoperative nausea and/or vomiting (PONV)

**Policy/Criteria**

*Provider must submit documentation (such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.*

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation® that Zuplenz is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

1. **Initial Approval Criteria**
   
   A. **Prevention of Nausea and Vomiting** (must meet all):
      1. Prescribed for the prevention of nausea/vomiting due to one of the following (a, b, or c):
         a. Cancer chemotherapy (*see Appendix D*);
         b. Radiation therapy;
         c. Surgery;
      2. Age ≥ 4 years;
      3. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
         a. Member is contraindicated or has experienced clinically significant adverse effects to the excipients in all formulary generic ondansetron products (regular tablet, orally disintegrating tablet, oral solution);
         b. Documentation supports member’s inability to use all formulary generic ondansetron products (regular tablet, orally disintegrating tablet, oral solution);
      4. Dose does not exceed one of the following (a or b):
         a. Chemotherapy, radiation therapy: 24 mg per day;
b. Postoperative: 16 mg as a single dose.

**Approval duration:**
- **Chemotherapy-induced nausea/vomiting:** projected course of chemotherapy up to 72 hours after completion of chemotherapy
- **Radiation therapy-induced nausea/vomiting:** projected course of radiation therapy up to 48 hours after completion of radiation therapy
- **Postoperative nausea/vomiting:** one time approval (3 days)

**B. Other diagnoses/indications**
1. Refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business if diagnosis is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized): CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

**II. Continued Therapy**

**A. Nausea and Vomiting Associated with Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy (must meet all):**
1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. Member continues to receive cancer chemotherapy (see Appendix D) or radiation therapy;
4. If request is for a dose increase, new dose does not exceed 24 mg per day.

**Approval duration: projected course of chemotherapy up to 72 hours after completion of chemotherapy OR projected course of radiation therapy up to 48 hours after completion of radiation therapy**

**B. Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting**
Re-authorization is not permitted. Members must meet the initial approval criteria.

**Approval duration: Not applicable**

**C. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):**
1. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit and documentation supports positive response to therapy.

**Approval duration: Duration of request or 12 months (whichever is less); or**
2. Refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business if diagnosis is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized): CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

**III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:**
**A.** Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off label use policies – CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents.

**IV. Appendices/General Information**

*Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key*
**Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives**

This table provides a listing of preferred alternative therapy recommended in the approval criteria. The drugs listed here may not be a formulary agent for all relevant lines of business and may require prior authorization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Name</th>
<th>Dosing Regimen</th>
<th>Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ondansetron (Zofran®, Zofran ODT)</td>
<td>Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with moderately emetogenic chemotherapy 8 mg PO given 30 min prior to chemotherapy, then repeat dose 8 hrs after initial dose, then 8 mg PO BID for 1 to 2 days after chemotherapy completion</td>
<td>PO: 24 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with highly emetogenic chemotherapy 24 mg PO given 30 min prior to start of single-day chemotherapy</td>
<td>IV: 16 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with emetogenic chemotherapy 0.15 mg/kg/dose IV given 30 min prior to chemotherapy, then repeat dose 4 and 8 hrs after initial dose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment of nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy* 16 to 24 mg PO daily or 8 to 16 mg IV</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with radiation therapy Total body irradiation: 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to radiotherapy Single high-dose radiotherapy: 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to irradiation, then 8 mg PO Q8H for 1 to 2 days after completion of radiotherapy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Name</td>
<td>Dosing Regimen</td>
<td>Dose Limit/Maximum Dose</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Daily fractionated radiotherapy:</strong> 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to irradiation, then 8 mg PO Q8H for each day of radiotherapy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prevention of PONV</strong></td>
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<td>16 mg PO given 1 hr prior to anesthesia or 4 mg IM/IV as a single dose given 30 min before end of anesthesia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Treatment of PONV</strong>*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4 mg IV as a single dose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name® (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name®) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.*

*Off-label*

**Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings**

- **Contraindication(s):**
  - Known hypersensitivity (e.g., anaphylaxis) to ondansetron or any components of the formulation
  - Concomitant use of apomorphine

- **Boxed warning(s):** none reported

**Appendix D: American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Recommendations in Oncology**

- **Minimal emetic risk chemotherapy:** No routine prophylaxis is recommended.
- **Low emetic risk chemotherapy:** Recommended options include dexamethasone (recommended by both ASCO and NCCN) or metoclopramide, prochlorperazine, or a 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonist (recommended by NCCN only). NK<sub>1</sub> receptor antagonists are not included in low risk antiemetic recommendations.
- **Moderate emetic risk chemotherapy:** 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists and dexamethasone may be used in combination and with or without NK<sub>1</sub> receptor antagonists. Olanzapine may also be used in combination with palonosetron and dexamethasone.
  - Examples of moderate emetic risk chemotherapy: azacitidine, alemtuzumab, bendamustine, carboplatin, clofarabine, cyclophosphamide < 1,500 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, cytarabine < 1,000 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, daunorubicin, doxorubicin, epirubicin, idarubicin, ifosfamide, irinotecan, oxaliplatin
- **High emetic risk chemotherapy:** NK<sub>1</sub> receptor antagonists are recommended for use in combination with 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists and dexamethasone. Olanzapine may also be used in combination with 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists, dexamethasone, and/or NK<sub>1</sub> receptor antagonists.
  - Examples of high emetic risk chemotherapy: carmustine, cisplatin, cyclophosphamide ≥ 1,500 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, dacarbazine, dactinomycin, mechlorethamine, streptozocin
- **Breakthrough emesis:** Per NCCN, an agent from a different drug class is recommended to be added to the current antiemetic regimen. Drug classes include atypical antipsychotics
(olanzapine), benzodiazepines (lorazepam), cannabinoids (dronabinol, nabilone), phenothiazines (prochlorperazine, promethazine), 5-HT3 receptor antagonists (dolasetron, ondansetron, granisetron), steroids (dexamethasone), or (haloperidol, metoclopramide, scopolamine). An NK1 receptor antagonist may be added to the prophylaxis regimen of the next chemotherapy cycle if not previously included.

V. Dosage and Administration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indication</th>
<th>Dosing Regimen</th>
<th>Maximum Dose</th>
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| Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with cancer chemotherapy | **Moderately emetogenic cancer chemotherapy:**  
Age 12 years or older: 8 mg PO given 30 min prior to chemotherapy, then repeat dose 8 hrs after initial dose, then 8 mg PO BID for 1 to 2 days after chemotherapy completion  
Age 4 to 11 years: 4 mg PO given 30 min prior to chemotherapy, then repeat dose 4 and 8 hrs after initial dose, then 8 mg PO TID for 1 to 2 days after chemotherapy completion  
**Highly emetogenic cancer chemotherapy:**  
24 mg PO given 30 min prior to start of single-day chemotherapy | 24 mg/day |
| Prevention of nausea and vomiting associated with radiotherapy | **Total body irradiation:** 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to each daily fraction of radiotherapy  
**Single high-dose radiotherapy:** 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to irradiation, then 8 mg PO Q8H for 1 to 2 days after completion of radiotherapy  
**Daily fractionated radiotherapy:** 8 mg PO given 1 to 2 hrs prior to irradiation, then 8 mg PO Q8H for each day of radiotherapy | 24 mg/day |
Indication | Dosing Regimen | Maximum Dose
--- | --- | ---
Prevention of postoperative nausea and vomiting | 16 mg PO given 1 hr prior to anesthesia | 16 mg/dose

VI. Product Availability
Oral soluble film: 4 mg, 8 mg

VII. References

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>P&amp;T Approval Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>05.15.18</td>
<td>08.18</td>
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3Q 2018 annual review: new policy created - policy split from CP.PMN.11 Oral antiemetics into individual policies; added requirement that member is scheduled to receive cancer chemotherapy, radiation therapy or surgery for initial and continued approval; removed requirement for ondansetron trial to occur in the last 60 days; modified trial and failure of ondansetron to require contraindications to excipients or documented inability to use generic ondansetron products for N/V associated with chemotherapy and radiation therapy; references reviewed and updated.

1Q 2019 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.

Important Reminder
This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in
developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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Note:
For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

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