Interferon Beta-1a Indications

Adjudication Rule

Abstract

For Members

Avonex is a form of protein called beta interferon that occurs naturally in the body. Interferons help body to fight viral infections.

Avonex is used to treat patients with relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS) to slow the accumulation of physical disability. This medication will not cure MS; it will only decrease the frequency of relapse symptoms.

Avonex may be harmful to an unborn baby, or may cause a miscarriage. Do not use Avonex if you are pregnant. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during treatment.

Before using Avonex, tell your doctor if you are allergic to any drugs, or if you have liver disease, a thyroid disorder, epilepsy or other seizure disorder, heart disease, chest pain (angina), heart failure, a heart rhythm disorder, or a history of depression or suicidal behavior.

For Medical Professionals

This adjudication rule highlights the coverage of Interferon Beta-1-a for all the health insurance plans administered by Daman.

Interferon Beta-1a is a form of a protein called beta interferon that occurs naturally in the body. It is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with relapsing forms of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). This includes people who have had their first symptoms of MS and have an MRI consistent with MS.

Interferon Beta-1a will not cure the MS but may decrease the number of relapses of the disease and slow the occurrence of some of the physical disability that is common in people with MS.

MS is a life-long disease that affects the nervous system by destroying the protective covering layer (myelin) that surrounds the nerve fibers. Interferon Beta-1a dosage is 30 mcg, once a week.

Interferon Beta-1a comes in two drug forms:

- Powder with solution for injection "Interferon Beta-1a 30mcg" (expires in 30 days) sub-cutaneous or intramuscular
- Prefilled syringe for sub-cutaneous or intramuscular injections (expires in 7 days)
Interferon Beta-1a Indications

Scope
This adjudication rule highlights the coverage of Interferon Beta 1-a for all the health insurance plans administered by Daman.

- Interferon Beta-1a treatment should be stopped in patients who develop progressive (worsening) MS.
- Patients who have experienced a first clinical episode of demyelination and have MRI features consistent with MS are at high risk to develop MS if any alternative diagnoses have been excluded.
- Neuroleptics based on Phenothiazines and Butyrophenones can cause demyelination.

Adjudication Policy
Eligibility / Coverage Criteria
Interferon Beta-1a will be covered for all Daman health insurance plans, except for Visitor’s and Abu Dhabi Basic Plan.

Daman covers Interferon Beta-1a for the following:

1. For patients with relapsing (340) MS.
   “Relapsing multiple sclerosis” is characterized by at least 2 recurrent attacks of neurologic dysfunction (relapses) over the preceding 3 years period without evidence of continuous progression between relapses. Interferon Beta-1a will be covered in relapsing MS only if:
   - MS is documented along with a brain MRI (only required at the first prescription) and,
   - Interferon Beta-1a is prescribed by a neurologist and internal medicine specialist

2. For treatment of patients who have experienced a single demyelination event with an active inflammatory process, if other alternative diagnoses than MS have been excluded. Interferon Beta-1a will be covered under this indication only if:
   - Demyelinating disease of central nervous system is documented with a brain MRI with demyelination consistent with MS

Daman does not cover Interferon Beta-1a for the below contraindications:

1. If patient has a history of hypersensitivity to natural or recombinant Interferon-ß or to any excipients
2. If patient has a history of hypersensitivity to Albumin (Human)
3. If patient has a current severe depression and/or suicidal ideation
4. If patient develops a progressive

After 2 years of treatment with Interferon Beta-1a, patient should be clinically evaluated and longer-term treatment should be decided on an individual basis by the treating physician.

Treatment should be discontinued if the patient develops chronic progressive MS.

Daman will only cover Interferon Beta-1a if:

- Documented diagnosis of relapsing MS supported by MRI at the first time prescribing Avonex®.
- Prescribed by a neurologist or by Internal Medicine specialist.

Requirements for Coverage
ICD and CPT codes must be coded to the highest level of specificity.

Non-Coverage

- As per policy terms and conditions, Interferon Beta-1a is not covered for Visitor’s Plan.
- Interferon Beta-1a is not covered for Basic Plan as per non-availability in Basic drug list.
- Interferon Beta-1a will only be covered for the indications listed in the “Eligibility or Coverage Criteria”.

Payment and Coding Rules
Please apply HAAD payment rules and regulations and relevant coding manuals for ICD, CPT, etc.

Adjudication Examples

Example 1

Question: A 26 year old male holding a Visitor’s Plan went to a hospital suffering from relapsing MS. Doctors’ diagnosis was MS, and he prescribes for him an Interferon Beta-1a. Will this claim be paid?

Answer: No, The claim will be rejected as anything related to chronic or pre-existing conditions for the Visitor Plan is a general exclusion.

Example 2

Question: A 35 year old male holding a Regional Plan, went to a hospital suffering for the first time from numbness in the lower limbs with tingling and pain in parts of the body. Brain MRI diagnosed the patient with MS. After examination, the doctor diagnosed him with relapse in MS. He prescribed for him an Interferon Beta-1a. Will this claim be paid?

Answer: Yes, The claim will be accepted.
Interferon Beta-1a Indications

Denial codes

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<td>MNEC-004</td>
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Appendices

A. References

1. Martindale: The Complete Drug Reference
2. Green Rain Codes for Medication
5. Micromedex™; Cerner Multum™; Wolters Kluwer™. (2000-2012). Avonex. Available at:

B. Revision History

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