

**AXERT®  
UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT CRITERIA**

<b>DRUG CLASS:</b>	5HT <sub>1</sub> agonists
<b>BRAND NAME:</b>	Axert 6.25 mg tablet
<b>(Generic)</b>	(almotriptan) 12.5 mg tablet

**FDA INDICATIONS:**

Oral almotriptan is indicated for the acute treatment of migraine with or without aura in adults. The 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists are not intended for the prophylactic therapy of migraine or for use in the management of hemiplegic or basilar migraine. Safety and effectiveness have also not been established for cluster headache.

**ICD-9 Codes:**

Migraine – with aura (“classic”): 346.0  
Migraine – idiopathic / without aura (“common”): 346.1

<b><u>QL CRITERIA:</u></b>	<b><u>Short Term:</u></b> <b>100 mg per 30 days</b>	<b><u>Extended Supply:</u></b> <b>300 mg per 90 days</b>
Axert 6.25 mg	16	48
Axert 12.5 mg	8	24

- *If patient is requiring amounts in excess of these numbers, please follow the Quantity Limitations (QL) criteria developed for Axert.*

**RATIONALE:**

Axert (almotriptan) tablets - Almotriptan has a maximum dose of 25 mg per day. Pharmacia has studied almotriptan in up to 4 migraines per month, or 100 mg per month.

**CRITERIA FOR EXCEEDING QUANTITY LIMITATIONS:**

1. Convey to physician the amount of the drug that the patient has already received (refer to QL criteria) and ask if the patient needs more than that amount. **AND**
2. Patient must have diagnosis of moderate to severe migraine headache. (Tension type and chronic daily headaches are NOT appropriate diagnoses). **AND**
3. Must have tried and failed at least 2 other abortive migraine therapy. Examples of medications used for abortive therapy include:
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin®)
  - Diclofenac (Voltaren®)
  - Flurbiprofen (Ansaid®)
  - Ergotamine-containing products (Cafergot, Wigraine, Ergomar, etc.)
  - Isometheptene mucate/Dichloralphenazone/Acetaminophen. (Midrin, etc.) **AND**
4. If patient experiences >4 migraine headaches per month, prophylactic therapy should be considered (see Table below). **AND**
5. The possibility of medication-induced, rebound, or chronic daily headache should be considered. **AND**
6. **Deny** if to be used in combination with another triptan (e.g., Zomig, Amerge, Imitrex, Frova, Maxalt, Relpax) or an ergotamine (e.g., Migranal, Cafergot) due to possibility of increased blood pressure effect.

**BLACK BOX WARNINGS:**

*None*

**RATIONALE:**

- Aspirin, acetaminophen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and combination products containing these key ingredients are generally considered first line abortive therapy for migraine.
- Prophylactic migraine therapy may reduce the frequency and severity of migraine attacks.
- Quantity limitations criteria are intended to prevent inappropriate use of the triptans.

**NURSING ASSESSMENT:**

1. Gather a complete medical history; note any contributing factors (i.e., smoker, diet, alcohol consumption, use of OTC medications, stress, etc.). Include migraine history and any precipitating factors.
2. Determine any history of cardiac problems or evidence of ischemic cardiovascular disease, as drug is contraindicated.
3. Ensure that a neurological examination has been performed to identify appropriate migraine category.
4. Obtain baseline ECG, liver (AST, ALT), and renal function tests.

**PROVIDER EDUCATION:**

1. Review appropriate method for administration (oral).
2. Nausea, vomiting, malaise, and fatigue are the most common adverse effects.
3. Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical 800-631-5273

**MISUSE AND CHRONIC DAILY HEADACHE:**

Chronic Daily Headache (CDH) is a syndrome that consists of a group of disorders that can be sub-classified into primary and secondary types. Drug-induced daily headache frequently arises during headache therapy. It can result from the daily use of ergotamines and excessive amounts of common analgesics. CDH usually manifest itself as a constant dull pressure in the frontal and occipital areas. Most of the patients will complain of headache upon awakening in the morning. The symptomatic medications used for the immediate relief of headache may actually perpetuate the headache if used frequently and in excessive quantities. Therapy of drug-induced headache is withdrawal of the responsible medication.

**CLINICAL OUTCOME:**

Reversal of acute migraine attack and relief of associated symptoms

**DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

The almotriptan dose for the treatment of acute migraine in adults is 6.25 mg to 12.5 mg; the 12.5 mg dose may provide a greater effect for the acute treatment of migraines in adults. A second dose may be taken no sooner than 2 hours after the initial dose. If the headache returns, a second dose may be taken no sooner than 2 hours after the initial dose. No more than 2 doses should be given within a 24-hour period. The total daily dose should not exceed 25 mg. Lower starting and maximum doses should be used in patients with renal or hepatic impairment. The safety of using almotriptan to treat more than 4 migraine headaches in a 30-day period has not been established. *NOTE:* In patients who do not respond to the first dose of almotriptan, the diagnosis of migraine should be reconsidered before administration of a second dose and the possibility of an evolving cerebrovascular event considered.

**RISK FACTORS/CONTRAINDICATIONS:**

1. Do not use with ergotamine-containing products or MAO-A inhibitors.
2. Do not use with patients with ischemic heart disease or uncontrolled blood pressure.
3. Do not use as a prophylactic agent.
4. Give only where diagnosis of migraine is clearly established.

- Contraindications to the use of 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists: pregnancy, peripheral vascular disease (i.e., thromboangitis, leuetic arteritis, Raynaud's Syndrome, thrombophlebitis, arteriosclerosis), coronary artery disease, uncontrolled hypertension.

**DRUG INTERACTIONS:**

- Ergot-containing drugs have been reported to cause prolonged vasospastic reactions. Because there is a theoretical basis that these effects may be additive, use of ergotamine-containing or ergot-type medications (like dihydroergotamine) and 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists within 24 hours of each other should be avoided.
- MAO-A inhibitors increase the systemic exposure of the 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists and concomitant use is contraindicated.
- Concomitant use of more than one 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonist within 24 hours of each other is not recommended.
- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) have been reported to cause weakness, hyperreflexia, and incoordination when coadministered with 5-HT<sub>1</sub> agonists.

**Migraine therapy options:**

Table Prophylactic therapy for migraine headache

DRUG CLASS	NAME
• Beta Blockers	Propranolol Atenolol Metoprolol Timolol
• Antidepressants	Amitriptyline Fluoxetine
• Calcium Channel Blockers	Nifedipine Verapamil Diltiazem
• Anticonvulsants	Divalproex sodium/sodium valproate Carbamazepine Gabapentin Topiramate
• NSAIDs	Naproxen Aspirin Ketoprofen
• Other	Feverfew Magnesium Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)

Initial Date: December 2002

Review Date: 9/2007

**REFERENCES:**

- Axert (almotriptan) product Information. Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical, Inc., Raritan, NJ. May 2007."
- Snow V, Weiss K, Wall EM et al. Pharmacologic Management of Acute Attacks of Migraine and Prevention of Migraine Headache. *Annals of Internal Med.* 2002;137(10):840-849.
- Silberstein SD et al. "Practice Parameter: Evidence based guidelines for migraine headache (an evidence-based review). Report on the Quality Standards Subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology." *Neurology* 2000;55:754-63.
- Seema M and Lowder DM. Medications for Migraine Prophylaxis. *Am Fam Physician* 2006;73:72-8.
- Edmeads JG, Gawel MJ, Vickers J. Strategies for diagnosing and managing medication-induced headache. *Can Fam Physician.* 1997; 43: 1249-1254.
- Mathew NT. Transformed migraine, analgesic rebound, and other chronic daily headaches. *Neurologic Clinics.* 1997; 15 (1): 167-186.
- Moore KL, Noble SL. Drug treatment of migraine: Part I. Acute therapy and drug-rebound headache. *Am Fam Physician.* 1997; 56 (8): 2039-2048.
- Edmeads J. Headaches in older people. *Postgrad Med.* 1997: 101 (5): 91-100.

**References supporting average number of migraine attacks per month:**

9. Solomon GD, et al. Neurology 1997;49:1219-25 (n=327) study ~3+/- 1.37 per month.
10. Zagami AS, et al. Neurology 1997;48(suppl 3):S25-8 (n=2,058) and Geraud GEA.
11. Eur Neurol 1996;32(suppl 2):24-7 (n=606) ~2.9-3.2 per month
12. Fletcher PE, et al. Headache Treatment: Trial Methodology and New Drugs. Lippincott-Raven Publishers, 1997 (n=701) ~2.9 to 3.2 per month
13. Visser WH, et al. Neurology 1996;46:522-6 (n=84) ~ 3-4 per month
14. Dowson A. Eur Neurol 1996;36(suppl 2):28-31 (n=40) ~ 2 per month

**General References:**

15. Beckett B. Headache disorder, in Dipiro J (ed): Pharmacotherapy: a pathophysiologic approach. Stamford, Simon & Schuster, 1997; pp1279-91.
16. Diener HC, Limmroth V. A practical guide to the management and prevention of migraine. Drugs 1998;56:811-24.
17. Goadsby PJ, Olesen J. Increasing the options for effective migraine management. Neurology 1997;48:s1-s3.
18. Honkasalo ML et al. A population-based survey of headache and migraine in 22,809 adults. Headache. 1993;33:403-12.
19. Peroutka S. Drugs effective in the therapy of migraine, Hardman J, Goodman A, Gilman, Limbird L (eds): Goodman & Gilman's The pharmacological basis of therapeutics, New York, 1996, pp487-502.
20. Silberstein SD. Practice parameter: evidenced based guidelines for migraine headache (an evidenced- based review): Report of the quality standards subcommittee of the American Academy of Neurology. Neurology 2000;55(6):754-63.
21. Spierings E, Gomez-Mancilla B, Grosz D, Rowland C, Whaley F, Jirgens K. Almotriptan vs oral sumatriptan in the abortive treatment of migraine. Arch Neurol 2001;58:944-950.
22. Pascual J, Falk RM, Piessens F, et al. Consistent efficacy and tolerability of almotriptan in the acute treatment of multiple migraine attacks: results of a large randomized double-blind placebo-controlled study. Cephalalgia 2000;20:588-596.
23. Cabarrocas X, Esbri R, Peris F, Ferrer P. Long-term efficacy and safety of oral almotriptan: interim analysis of a 1-year open study. Headache 2001;41:57-62.
24. Colman SS, Brod MI, Krishnamurthy A, Rowland CR, Jirgens K. Treatment satisfaction, functional status, and other health related quality of life of migraine patients treated with almotriptan or sumatriptan. Clin Ther 2001;23:127-145.
25. Fleishaker JC, Sisson TA, Carel BJ, Azie NE. Lack of pharmacokinetic interaction between the antimigraine compound almotriptan and propranolol in healthy volunteers. Cephalalgia 2001;21:61-65.
26. Fleishaker JC, Sisson TA, Carel BJ, Azie NE. Pharmacokinetic interaction between verapamil and almotriptan in healthy volunteers. Clin Pharmacol Ther 2000;67:498-503.
27. <http://headaches.about.com/bl-glossary-b.htm>