

DRUG CLASS:	5HT ₁ agonists	
BRAND NAME:	Axert	6.25 mg tablet
(Generic)	(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-HT₁ 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

<u>QL CRITERIA:</u>	<u>Short Term:</u> 100 mg per 30 days	<u>Extended Supply:</u> 300 mg per 90 days
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 (eg. 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 consist 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. Subsequent doses should be separated by not less than 2 hours. The total daily dose should not exceed 25 mg. 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.
5. Contraindications to the use of 5-HT₁ agonists: pregnancy, peripheral vascular disease (i.e., thromboangitis, leuetic arteritis, Raynaud's Syndrome, thrombophlebitis, arteriosclerosis), hepatic or renal impairment, 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-HT₁ agonists within 24 hours of each other should be avoided.
- MAO-A inhibitors increase the systemic exposure of the 5-HT₁ agonists and concomitant use is contraindicated.
- Concomitant use of more than one 5-HT₁ 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-HT₁ 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: 8/30/2006

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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:

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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>