

leflunomide (*Arava*[®])

To Initiate a Coverage Review, call 1 800 753-2851

Covered Medication

- leflunomide (*Arava*[®] tablets)

What it does and How it's Used

- *Arava*[®] is an immunomodulatory agent that inhibits dihydroorotate dehydrogenase (an enzyme involved in de novo pyrimidine synthesis with antiproliferative activity).
- Inhibition of this enzyme results in suppressing the activity of autoimmune lymphocytes that are involved in the pathogenesis (of joint destruction) associated with rheumatoid arthritis (RA).
- *Arava*[®] is used to improve the signs and symptoms of early stage RA.
- *Arava*[®] is similar to methotrexate in its ability to slow progressive joint destruction.
- A treatment program that includes methotrexate as initial therapy may be considered for most patients unless a patient has a contraindication to or is unable to receive methotrexate (e.g., such as in the presence of liver or lung disease).
- *Arava*[®] may be used in combination or in place of methotrexate in patients who do not respond adequately to methotrexate alone.

Benefit Design

Coverage for *Arava*[®] is determined through prior authorization for every claim

Rationale for Coverage Authorization

To reduce exposure to cost associated with *Arava*[®] for the treatment of conditions other than rheumatoid arthritis.

Coverage Authorization Criteria

- Coverage is provided for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis in the following situations:
 - Patient has experienced a therapeutic failure with methotrexate or has had an inadequate response to methotrexate
 - Patient is unable to receive methotrexate (e.g., use of methotrexate is contraindicated in the patient)

References

Medscape Drug Info. *Arava*[®] Oral: Pharmacology & Chemistry. Available at:
<http://promini.medscape.com/drugdb/drug...%2D18694&DrugName=ARAVA+ORAL&DrugType=1>

Product Information: leflunomide tablets (*Arava*[®] - Aventis) 2000.

Vibeke S, Cohen H, Schiff M et al. Treatment of Active Rheumatoid Arthritis With Leflunomide Compared With Placebo and Methotrexate. *Arch Intern Med.* 1999; 159: 2542-2550.

Wolfe et al. RA Consensus Recommendations. *The Journal of Rheumatology.* 2001; 28: 1423-1430