



Drug Coverage Policy

Effective Date06/01/2025
Coverage Policy Number.....IP0679
Policy Title.....Kevzara Prior
Authorization Policy

Inflammatory Conditions – Kevzara Prior Authorization Policy

- Kevzara® (sarilumab subcutaneous injection – Regeneron/Sanofi-Aventis)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The following Coverage Policy applies to health benefit plans administered by Cigna Companies. Certain Cigna Companies and/or lines of business only provide utilization review services to clients and do not make coverage determinations. References to standard benefit plan language and coverage determinations do not apply to those clients. Coverage Policies are intended to provide guidance in interpreting certain standard benefit plans administered by Cigna Companies. Please note, the terms of a customer's particular benefit plan document [Group Service Agreement, Evidence of Coverage, Certificate of Coverage, Summary Plan Description (SPD) or similar plan document] may differ significantly from the standard benefit plans upon which these Coverage Policies are based. For example, a customer's benefit plan document may contain a specific exclusion related to a topic addressed in a Coverage Policy. In the event of a conflict, a customer's benefit plan document always supersedes the information in the Coverage Policies. In the absence of a controlling federal or state coverage mandate, benefits are ultimately determined by the terms of the applicable benefit plan document. Coverage determinations in each specific instance require consideration of 1) the terms of the applicable benefit plan document in effect on the date of service; 2) any applicable laws/regulations; 3) any relevant collateral source materials including Coverage Policies and; 4) the specific facts of the particular situation. Each coverage request should be reviewed on its own merits. Medical directors are expected to exercise clinical judgment where appropriate and have discretion in making individual coverage determinations. Where coverage for care or services does not depend on specific circumstances, reimbursement will only be provided if a requested service(s) is submitted in accordance with the relevant criteria outlined in the applicable Coverage Policy, including covered diagnosis and/or procedure code(s). Reimbursement is not allowed for services when billed for conditions or diagnoses that are not covered under this Coverage Policy (see "Coding Information" below). When billing, providers must use the most appropriate codes as of the effective date of the submission. Claims submitted for services that are not accompanied by covered code(s) under the applicable Coverage Policy will be denied as not covered. Coverage Policies relate exclusively to the administration of health benefit plans. Coverage Policies are not recommendations for treatment and should never be used as treatment guidelines. In certain markets, delegated vendor guidelines may be used to support medical necessity and other coverage determinations.

Overview

Kevzara, an interleukin-6 receptor inhibitor, is indicated for the treatment of the following conditions:¹

- **Rheumatoid arthritis**, in adults with moderate to severe active disease who have had an inadequate response or intolerance to one or more disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs).
- **Polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis**, for the treatment of active disease in patients who weigh ≥ 63 kg.
- **Polymyalgia rheumatica**, in adults who have had an inadequate response to corticosteroids or who cannot tolerate corticosteroid taper.

Guidelines

Kevzara is addressed in the following guidelines:

- **Rheumatoid Arthritis:** Guidelines from the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) [2021] recommend addition of a biologic or a targeted synthetic DMARD for a patient taking the maximum tolerated dose of methotrexate who is not at target.²
- **Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis:** Guidelines specific to juvenile non-systemic polyarthritis, sacroiliitis, and enthesitis (2019) were published prior to approval of Kevzara for PJIA.⁸ For patients without risk factors, initial therapy with a DMARD is conditionally recommended over a biologic. Biologics are conditionally recommended as initial treatment when combined with a DMARD over biologic monotherapy.
- **Polymyalgia Rheumatica:** Guidelines from the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR)/ACR (2015) were published prior to approval of Kevzara for this condition.⁷ The minimum effective individualized duration of glucocorticoid therapy is strongly recommended.

Coverage Policy

Policy Statement

Prior Authorization is required for benefit coverage of Kevzara. All approvals are provided for the approval duration noted below. In cases where the approval is authorized in months, 1 month is equal to 30 days. Because of the specialized skills required for evaluation and diagnosis of patients treated with Kevzara as well as the monitoring required for adverse events and long-term efficacy, initial approval requires Kevzara to be prescribed by or in consultation with a physician who specializes in the condition being treated.

NOTE: This product also requires the use of preferred products before approval of the requested product. Refer to the respective *Inflammatory Conditions Preferred Specialty Management Policy for Employer Plans: Standard/Performance, Value/Advantage, Total Savings Prescription Drug Lists (PSM001), Individual and Family Plans (PSM002), or Legacy Drug List Plans (PSM017)* for additional preferred product criteria requirements and exceptions.

Kevzara is considered medically necessary when ONE of the following is met (1, 2, or 3):

FDA-Approved Indication

1. **Rheumatoid Arthritis.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

- A) Initial Therapy.** Approve for 6 months if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i, ii and iii):
- i.** Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
 - ii.** Patient has tried ONE conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drug (DMARD) for at least 3 months; AND
Note: Examples of conventional synthetic DMARDs include methotrexate (oral or injectable), leflunomide, hydroxychloroquine, and sulfasalazine. An exception to the requirement for a trial of one conventional synthetic DMARD can be made if the patient has already had a 3-month trial of at least one biologic other than the requested drug. A biosimilar of the requested biologic does not count. Refer to [Appendix](#) for examples of biologics used for rheumatoid arthritis. A patient who has already tried a biologic is not required to "step back" and try a conventional synthetic DMARD.
 - iii.** The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist; OR
- B) Patient is Currently Receiving Kevzara.** Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
- i.** Patient has been established on therapy for at least 6 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).
 - ii.** Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a)** Patient experienced a beneficial clinical response when assessed by at least one objective measure; OR
Note: Examples of objective measures of disease activity include Clinical Disease Activity Index (CDAI), Disease Activity Score (DAS) 28 using erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) or C-reactive protein (CRP), Patient Activity Scale (PAS)-II, Rapid Assessment of Patient Index Data 3 (RAPID-3), and/or Simplified Disease Activity Index (SDAI).
 - b)** Patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased joint pain, morning stiffness, or fatigue; improved function or activities of daily living; decreased soft tissue swelling in joints or tendon sheaths.
- 2. Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):
- A) Initial Therapy.** Approve for 6 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):
- i.** Patient weighs ≥ 63 kg; AND
 - ii.** Patient meets ONE of the following (a, b, c, or d):
 - a)** Patient has tried one other systemic therapy for this condition; OR
Note: Examples of other systemic therapies include methotrexate, sulfasalazine, leflunomide, or a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). A previous trial of one biologic other than the requested drug also counts as a trial of one systemic therapy for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. A biosimilar of the requested drug does not count. Refer to [Appendix](#) for examples of biologics used for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis.
 - b)** Patient will be starting on Kevzara concurrently with methotrexate, sulfasalazine, or leflunomide; OR
 - c)** Patient has an absolute contraindication to methotrexate, sulfasalazine, or leflunomide; OR
Note: Examples of absolute contraindications to methotrexate include pregnancy, breastfeeding, alcoholic liver disease, immunodeficiency syndrome, and blood dyscrasias; OR
 - d)** Patient has aggressive disease, as determined by the prescriber; AND
 - iii.** The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist; OR

B) Patient is Currently Receiving Kevzara. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):

i. Patient has been established on therapy for at least 6 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with this medication is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).

ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):

a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating the requested medication); OR

Note: Examples of objective measures include Physician Global Assessment (MD global), Parent/Patient Global Assessment of Overall Well-Being (PGA), Parent/Patient Global Assessment of Disease Activity (PDA), Juvenile Arthritis Disease Activity Score (JDAS), Clinical Juvenile Arthritis Disease Activity Score (cJDAS), Juvenile Spondyloarthritis Disease Activity Index (JSpADA), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein, erythrocyte sedimentation rate), and/or reduced dosage of corticosteroids.

b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested medication), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as improvement in limitation of motion, less joint pain or tenderness, decreased duration of morning stiffness or fatigue, improved function or activities of daily living.

3. Polymyalgia Rheumatica. Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 6 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):

i. Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND

ii. Patient has tried one systemic corticosteroid; AND

Note: An example of a systemic corticosteroid is prednisone.

iii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist; OR

B) Patient is Currently Receiving Kevzara. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):

i. Patient has been established on therapy for at least 6 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).

ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):

a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating Kevzara); OR

Note: Examples of objective measures are serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein, erythrocyte sedimentation rate), resolution of fever, and/or reduced dosage of corticosteroids.

b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating Kevzara), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased shoulder, neck, upper arm, hip, or thigh pain or stiffness; improved range of motion; and/or decreased fatigue.

When coverage is available and medically necessary, the dosage, frequency, duration of therapy, and site of care should be reasonable, clinically appropriate, and supported by evidence-based literature and adjusted based upon severity, alternative available treatments, and previous response to therapy.

Receipt of sample product does not satisfy any criteria requirements for coverage.

Conditions Not Covered

Kevzara for any other use is considered not medically necessary, including the following (this list may not be all inclusive; criteria will be updated as new published data are available):

- 1. Ankylosing Spondylitis.** In a Phase II study, Kevzara did not demonstrate efficacy in patients with ankylosing spondylitis.³
- 2. Concurrent Use with a Biologic or with a Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drug.** This medication should not be administered in combination with another biologic or with a targeted synthetic oral small molecule drug used for an inflammatory condition (see [Appendix](#) for examples). Combination therapy is generally not recommended due to a potentially higher rate of adverse events and lack of controlled clinical data supporting additive efficacy.
Note: This does NOT exclude the use of conventional synthetic DMARDs (e.g., methotrexate, leflunomide, hydroxychloroquine, or sulfasalazine) in combination with this medication.

References

1. Kevzara® subcutaneous injection [prescribing information]. Bridgewater, NJ: Regeneron/Sanofi-Aventis; June 2024.
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5. US National Institutes of Health. In: ClinicalTrials.gov [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US). 2000- [cited 2024 June 17]. Available from: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/>. Search terms: coronavirus, sarilumab.
6. Rochwerg B, Siemieniuk R, Jacobs M, et al. Therapeutics and COVID-19: living guideline [version 14.1]. Updated November 9, 2023. Available at: <https://app.magicapp.org/#/guideline/nBkO1E>. Accessed on March 13, 2025.
7. Dejaco C, Singh YP, Perel P, et al. 2015 Recommendations for the management of polymyalgia rheumatica: a European League Against Rheumatism/American College of Rheumatology collaborative initiative. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2015;74(10):1799-807.
8. Ringold S, Angeles-Han ST, Beukelman T, et al. 2019 American College of Rheumatology/Arthritis Foundation guideline for the treatment of juvenile idiopathic arthritis: therapeutic approaches for non-systemic polyarthritis, sacroiliitis, and enthesitis. *Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken).* 2019;71(6):717-734.

Revision Details

Type of Revision	Summary of Changes	Date
New	New policy	11/01/2024

Annual Revision	No criteria changes	05/01/2025
Selected Revision	COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019): Removed from Conditions Not Covered.	06/01/2025

The policy effective date is in force until updated or retired.

APPENDIX

	Mechanism of Action	Examples of Indications*
Biologics		
Adalimumab SC Products (Humira®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Cimzia® (certolizumab pegol SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA, RA
Etanercept SC Products (Enbrel®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA
Infliximab IV Products (Remicade®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Zymfentra® (infliximab-dyyb SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	CD, UC
Simponi®, Simponi Aria® (golimumab SC injection, golimumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of TNF	SC formulation: AS, PsA, RA, UC
		IV formulation: AS, PJIA, PsA, RA
Tocilizumab Products (Actemra® IV, biosimilar; Actemra SC, biosimilar)	Inhibition of IL-6	SC formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
		IV formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
Kevzara® (sarilumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-6	RA
Orencia® (abatacept IV infusion, abatacept SC injection)	T-cell costimulation modulator	SC formulation: JIA, PSA, RA
		IV formulation: JIA, PsA, RA
Rituximab IV Products (Rituxan®, biosimilars)	CD20-directed cytolytic antibody	RA
Kineret® (anakinra SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-1	JIA^, RA
Omvo® (mirikizumab IV infusion, SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	CD, UC
Ustekinumab Products (Stelara® IV, biosimilars, Stelara SC, biosimilars)	Inhibition of IL-12/23	SC formulation: CD, PsO, PsA, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Siliq® (brodalumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17	PsO
Cosentyx® (secukinumab SC injection; secukinumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-17A	SC formulation: AS, ERA, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
		IV formulation: AS, nr-axSpA, PsA
Taltz® (ixekizumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A	AS, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
Bimzelx® (bimekizumab-bkzx SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A/17F	PsO, AS, nr-axSpA, PsA
Ilumya® (tildrakizumab-asmn SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	PsO
Skyrizi® (risankizumab-rzaa SC injection, risankizumab-rzaa IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: CD, PSA, PsO, UC

		IV formulation: CD, UC
Tremfya® (guselkumab SC injection, guselkumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: PsA, PsO, UC
Entyvio® (vedolizumab IV infusion, vedolizumab SC injection)	Integrin receptor antagonist	IV formulation: UC
Oral Therapies/Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drugs		
Otezla® (apremilast tablets)	Inhibition of PDE4	PsO, PsA
Cibinqo™ (abrocitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD
Olumiant® (baricitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, AA
Litfulo® (ritlecitinib capsules)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Leqselvi® (deuruxolitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Rinvoq® (upadacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD, AS, nr-axSpA, RA, PsA, UC
Rinvoq® LQ (upadacitinib oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	PsA, PJIA
Sotyktu® (deucravacitinib tablets)	Inhibition of TYK2	PsO
Xeljanz® (tofacitinib tablets/oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PJIA, PsA, UC
Xeljanz® XR (tofacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PsA, UC
Zeposia® (ozanimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC
Velsipity® (etrasimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC

* Not an all-inclusive list of indications. Refer to the prescribing information for the respective agent for FDA-approved indications; SC – Subcutaneous; TNF – Tumor necrosis factor; AS – Ankylosing spondylitis; CD – Crohn’s disease; JIA – Juvenile idiopathic arthritis; PsO – Plaque psoriasis; PsA – Psoriatic arthritis; RA – Rheumatoid arthritis; UC – Ulcerative colitis; nr-axSpA – Non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis; IV – Intravenous, PJIA – Polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis; IL – Interleukin; SJIA – Systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis; ^ Off-label use of Kineret in JIA supported in guidelines; ERA – Enthesitis-related arthritis; DMARD – Disease-modifying antirheumatic drug; PDE4 – Phosphodiesterase 4; JAK – Janus kinase; AD – Atopic dermatitis; AA – Alopecia areata; TYK2 – Tyrosine kinase 2.

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