PRIOR AUTHORIZATION POLICY

POLICY: Inflammatory Conditions – Ustekinumab Subcutaneous Products Prior Authorization Policy with Dosing
- Stelara® (ustekinumab subcutaneous injection – Janssen Biotech)
- Wezlana™ (ustekinumab-auub subcutaneous injection – Amgen)

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OVERVIEW

Ustekinumab subcutaneous, an interleukin-12/23 blocker, is indicated for the following uses:[1]
- **Crohn's disease**, in patients ≥ 18 years of age with moderate to severe active disease.
- **Plaque psoriasis**, in patients ≥ 6 years of age with moderate to severe disease who are candidates for phototherapy or systemic therapy.
- **Psoriatic arthritis**, in patients ≥ 6 years of age with active disease.
- **Ulcerative colitis**, in patients ≥ 18 years of age with moderate to severe active disease.

Dosing

A weight-based dose is administered by subcutaneous (SC) injection under the supervision of a physician or by the patient or a caregiver. Here is the approved dosing listed in the prescribing information:
- **Crohn's disease:** Starting 8 weeks after an initial intravenous (IV) dose, the maintenance dose is 90 mg SC injection once every 8 weeks (Q8W).
- **Plaque psoriasis:**
  - Adults weighing ≤ 100 kg: 45 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then once every 12 weeks (Q12W) thereafter.
  - Adults weighing > 100 kg: 90 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing < 60 kg: 0.75 mg/kg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing 60 kg to 100 kg: 45 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing > 100 kg: 90 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
- **Psoriatic arthritis:**
  - Adults weighing > 100 kg with co-existent moderate to severe plaque psoriasis: 90 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then every Q12W thereafter.
  - All other adults: 45 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing < 60 kg: 0.75 mg/kg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing 60 kg to 100 kg: 45 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
  - Pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age weighing > 100 kg with co-existent moderate to severe plaque psoriasis: 90 mg SC at Week 0, Week 4, and then Q12W thereafter.
- **Ulcerative colitis:** Starting 8 weeks after an initial IV dose, the maintenance dose is 90 mg SC Q8W.

Guidelines

Guidelines for the treatment of inflammatory conditions recommend use of ustekinumab subcutaneous.

- **Crohn's Disease:** The American College of Gastroenterology has guidelines for Crohn's disease (2018).[2] Ustekinumab is a treatment option in patients who have moderate to severe disease despite treatment with another agent (e.g., corticosteroid, thiopurine, methotrexate, or tumor necrosis factor inhibitors [TNFis]).
- **Plaque Psoriasis:** Guidelines from the American Academy of Dermatology and National Psoriasis Foundation (2019) recommend ustekinumab as a monotherapy treatment option or in combination with other therapies for adults with moderate to severe disease.[3]
- **Psoriatic Arthritis:** Guidelines from the American College of Rheumatology (2018) recommend ustekinumab after other agents (e.g., TNFis) have been tried.[4] Ustekinumab may be used in patients who have active disease despite treatment with other agents, particularly in those with concomitant inflammatory bowel disease.[4]
- **Ulcerative Colitis:** Guidelines from the American Gastroenterological Association (2020) recommend ustekinumab for moderate to severe ulcerative colitis.[6] Ustekinumab is not addressed in the 2019 American College of Gastroenterology guidelines for ulcerative colitis.[5] These guidelines note that the following agents can be used for induction of remission in moderately to severely active disease: Uceris® (budesonide extended-release tablets); oral or IV systemic corticosteroids, Entyvio® (vedolizuamb IV infusion), Xeljanz® (tofacitinib tablets, extended-release tablets), or TNFis (adalimumab, Simponi® subcutaneous [golimumab SC injection], infliximab).

POLICY STATEMENT

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

Automation: None.

RECOMMENDED AUTHORIZATION CRITERIA

Coverage of ustekinumab subcutaneous is recommended in those who meet one of the following criteria:

FDA-Approved Indications

1. **Crohn's Disease.** 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, iii, and iv):
     - **i.** Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
     - **ii.** According to the prescriber, the patient will receive a single induction dose with ustekinumab intravenous within 2 months of initiating therapy with ustekinumab subcutaneous; AND
     - **iii.** Patient meets ONE of the following (a, b, c, or d):
       - **a)** Patient has tried or is currently taking corticosteroids, or corticosteroids are contraindicated in this patient; OR
       - **b)** Patient has tried one conventional systemic therapy for Crohn's disease; OR
         Note: Examples of conventional systemic therapy for Crohn's disease include azathioprine, 6-mercaptopurine, or methotrexate. An exception to the requirement for a

trial of or contraindication to steroids or a trial of one other conventional systemic agent can be made if the patient has already tried 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 Crohn's disease. A patient who has already received a biologic is not required to "step back" and try another agent.

c) Patient has enterocutaneous (perianal or abdominal) or rectovaginal fistulas; OR

d) Patient had ileocolonic resection (to reduce the chance of Crohn's disease recurrence); AND

iv. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist.

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

i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug 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 drug); OR
Note: Examples of objective measures include fecal markers (e.g., fecal lactoferrin, fecal calprotectin), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein), imaging studies (magnetic resonance enterography, computed tomography enterography), endoscopic assessment, and/or reduced dose of corticosteroids.

b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, fatigue, stool frequency, and/or blood in stool.

2. Plaque Psoriasis. Approve (45 mg syringe/vial) for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):
Note: If the 90 mg syringe is requested, approve if the patient meets ONE of the following:

- Patient weighs > 100 kg; OR
- Patient is currently receiving the 90 mg syringe; OR
- Patient has received standard dosing with the 45 mg syringe/vial for at least 3 months with inadequate efficacy.

A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 3 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):

i. Patient is ≥ 6 years of age; AND

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

a) Patient has tried at least one traditional systemic agent for psoriasis for at least 3 months, unless intolerant; OR
Note: Examples of traditional systemic agents used for psoriasis include methotrexate, cyclosporine, or acitretin. A 3-month trial of psoralen plus ultraviolet A light (PUVA) also counts. An exception to the requirement for a trial of one traditional systemic agent for psoriasis can be made if the patient has had a 3-month trial or previous intolerance to 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 plaque psoriasis. A patient who has already tried a biologic for psoriasis is not required to "step back" and try a traditional systemic agent for psoriasis.

b) Patient has a contraindication to methotrexate as determined by the prescriber; AND

iii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a dermatologist.

B) Patient is Currently Receiving Ustekinumab Subcutaneous. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):

i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 3 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 3 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).

ii. Patient experienced a beneficial clinical response, defined as improvement from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug) in at least one of the following: estimated body surface area, erythema, induration/thickness, and/or scale of areas affected by psoriasis; AND

iii. Compared with baseline (prior to receiving the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, itching, and/or burning.

3. Psoriatic Arthritis. Approve (45 mg syringe/vial) for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

Note: If the 90 mg syringe is requested, approve if the patient meets ONE of the following:

- Patient has moderate to severe plaque psoriasis AND weighs > 100 kg; OR
- Patient is currently receiving the 90 mg syringe; OR
- Patient has received standard dosing with the 45 mg syringe/vial for at least 3 months with inadequate efficacy.

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

i. Patient is ≥ 6 years of age; AND

ii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist or a dermatologist.

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

i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug 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 drug); OR

Note: Examples of standardized measures of disease activity include Disease Activity Index for Psoriatic Arthritis (DAPSA), Composite Psoriatic Disease Activity Index (CPDAI), Psoriatic Arthritis Disease Activity Score (PsA DAS), Grace Index, Leeds Enthesitis Score (LEI), Spondyloarthritis Consortium of Canada (SPARCC) enthesitis score, Leeds Dactylitis Instrument Score, Minimal Disease Activity (MDA), Psoriatic Arthritis Impact of Disease (PsAID-12), and/or serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein, erythrocyte sedimentation rate).

b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as less joint pain, morning stiffness, or fatigue; improved function or activities of daily living; decreased soft tissue swelling in joints or tendon sheaths.

4. Ulcerative Colitis. 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, iii, and iv):

i. Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND

ii. According to the prescriber, the patient will receive a single induction dose with ustekinumab intravenous within 2 months of initiating therapy with ustekinumab subcutaneous; AND

iii. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):

a) Patient has had a trial of one systemic agent for ulcerative colitis; OR

Note: Examples include 6-mercaptopurine, azathioprine, cyclosporine, tacrolimus, or a corticosteroid such as prednisone, methylprednisolone. A trial of one biologic other than the requested drug also counts as a trial of one systemic agent for ulcerative colitis. A biosimilar of the requested biologic does not count. Refer to Appendix for examples of biologics used for ulcerative colitis.

b) Patient meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:
(1) Patient has pourchitis; AND
(2) Patient has tried an antibiotic, probiotic, corticosteroid enema, or mesalamine enema; AND
Note: Examples of antibiotics include metronidazole and ciprofloxacin. Examples of corticosteroid enemas include hydrocortisone enema.

iv. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist.

B) Patient is Currently Receiving Ustekinumab Subcutaneous. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug 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 drug); OR
Note: Examples of assessment for inflammatory response include fecal markers (e.g., fecal calprotectin), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein), endoscopic assessment, and/or reduced dose of corticosteroids.
b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, fatigue, stool frequency, and/or decreased rectal bleeding.

CONDITIONS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

Coverage of ustekinumab subcutaneous is not recommended in the following situations:

1. **Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS).** There are other biologic therapies indicated in AS. More data are needed to demonstrate efficacy of ustekinumab in this condition. There is a published proof-of-concept trial evaluating ustekinumab in AS (TOPAS – UsTekinumab for the treatment Of Patients with active Ankylosing Spondylitis).[4] TOPAS was a prospective, open-label study evaluating ustekinumab 90 mg subcutaneous at Week 0, 4, and 16 in patients (n = 20) with AS. After Week 16, patients were followed through Week 28. Patients who previously failed to respond to tumor necrosis factor inhibitor (TNFi) were excluded. The primary endpoint was a 40% improvement in disease activity at Week 24 according to the Assessment of SpondyloArthritis International Society (ASAS) criteria (ASAS40) in the intent-to-treat population which included all patients who received at least one dose of ustekinumab. In all, 65% of patients (95% confidence interval [CI]: 41%, 85%; n = 13/20) achieved an ASAS40 response at Week 24. There was at least a 50% improvement of the BASDAI (Bath Ankylosing Spondylitis Disease Activity Index) achieved by 55% of patients (95% CI: 32%, 77%; n = 11/20). However, enthesitis (measured by MASES [Maastricht AS Entheses Score] and SPARCC [SPondyloArthritis Research Consortium of Canada] enthesitis indices) and the number of swollen joints were not significantly improved at Week 24. There was a significant reduction of active inflammation on magnetic resonance imaging at Week 24 compared with baseline in sacroiliac joints.

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, and sulfasalazine) in combination with this medication.

3. Coverage is not recommended for circumstances not listed in the Recommended Authorization Criteria. Criteria will be updated as new published data are available.

REFERENCES

1. Stelara® subcutaneous injection [prescribing information]. Horsham, PA: Janssen Biotech; March 2024.
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3. Menter A, Strober BE, Kaplan DH, et al. Joint AAD-NPF guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis with biologics. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2019;80(4):1029-1072.
4. Singh JA, Guyatt G, Ogdie A, et al. 2018 American College of Rheumatology/National Psoriasis Foundation Guideline for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis. *Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken).* 2019;71(1):2-29.
5. Rubin DT, Ananthakrishnan AN, Siegel CA, et al. ACG clinical guideline: ulcerative colitis in adults. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2019;114(3):384-413.
6. Feuerstein JD, Isaac s KL, Schneider Y, et al. AGA clinical practice guidelines on the management of moderate to severe ulcerative colitis. *Gastroenterology*. 2020;158:1450-1461.
7. Poddubnyy D, Hermann KG, Callhoff J, et al. Ustekinumab for the treatment of patients with active ankylosing spondylitis: results of a 28-week, prospective, open-label, proof-of-concept study (TOPAS). *Ann Rheum Dis*. 2014;73(5):817-823.

APPENDIX

* 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.