

5.50.011

Section:	Prescription Drugs	Effective Date:	April 1, 2026
Subsection:	Gastrointestinal Agents	Original Policy Date:	November 15, 2013
Subject:	Cimzia	Page:	1 of 15

Last Review Date: March 6, 2026

Cimzia

Description

Cimzia (certolizumab pegol)

Background

Cimzia (certolizumab pegol) is a tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF- α) blocker. Tumor necrosis factor is an endogenous protein that regulates a number of physiologic processes, including the inflammation response associated with some autoimmune inflammatory diseases (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indications: Cimzia is a tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blocker indicated for: (1)

1. Reducing signs and symptoms of Crohn's disease and maintaining clinical response in adult patients with moderately to severely active disease who have had an inadequate response to conventional therapy
2. Treatment of adults with moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis
3. Treatment of active polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis (pJIA) in patients 2 years of age and older
4. Treatment of adult patients with active psoriatic arthritis
5. Treatment of adult patients with active ankylosing spondylitis
6. Treatment of adults with active non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis with objective signs of inflammation
7. Treatment of adults with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis who are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy

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Cimzia carries boxed warnings regarding serious infections and malignancies. Because Cimzia suppresses the immune system, patients are at a greater risk for getting serious infections leading to hospitalization or death, including tuberculosis (TB), invasive fungal infections, and infections due to other opportunistic pathogens. Lymphoma and other malignancies have been reported in children and adolescent patients treated with TNF blockers.

Patients should be screened for latent tuberculosis infection. Patients at risk for hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection should be evaluated for evidence of prior HBV infection. Hepatitis B virus carriers should be monitored for reactivation during and several months after therapy. Cimzia should not be used in combination with other biologic agents. Cimzia should not be initiated in patients with an active infection. Cimzia should be discontinued if a patient develops a serious infection during treatment (1).

Pancytopenia, aplastic anemia, lupus-like syndrome, anaphylaxis reactions, and congestive heart failure (new onset or worsening) may develop during Cimzia therapy and therapy should be discontinued (1).

The use of Cimzia in combination with other biological DMARDs is not recommended. Serious infections may occur with concurrent use of anakinra (an interleukin-1 antagonist) and another TNF blocker, etanercept. There is a higher risk of serious infections in the combination use of TNF blockers with abatacept and rituximab. Because of the nature of the adverse events seen with this combination therapy, similar toxicities may also result from the use of Cimzia in this combination. Therefore, the use of Cimzia in combination with other biological DMARDs is not recommended (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Cimzia in pediatric patients less than 2 years of age for polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis have not been established. The safety and effectiveness of Cimzia in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age for all other indications have not been established (1).

Related policies

Enbrel, Humira, Infliximab, Simponi, Zymfentra

Policy

This policy statement applies to clinical review performed for pre-service (Prior Approval, Precertification, Advanced Benefit Determination, etc.) and/or post-service claims.

Cimzia may be considered **medically necessary** if the conditions indicated below are met.

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Cimzia may be considered **investigational** for all other indications.

Prior-Approval Requirements

Cimzia Lyophilized Powder submitted under the medical benefit is not subject to biologic step edits.

Diagnoses

Patient must have **ONE** of the following with provided documentation (e.g., medical records, laboratory reports):

1. Moderate to severe Crohn's disease (CD)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance or contraindication to at least **ONE** conventional therapy option (see Appendix 1)
 - c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

2. Moderate to severely active rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to a 3-month trial of at least **ONE** conventional disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) (see Appendix 3)
 - c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

3. Active polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis (pJIA)

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- a. 2 years of age or older
 - b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to a 3-month trial of at least **ONE** conventional disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) (see Appendix 3)
 - c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of the following:
 - i. Age 2-17, weight 10kg to < 20kg: 50 mg every other week
 - ii. Age 2-17, weight 20kg to < 40kg: 100 mg every other week
 - iii. Age 2-17, weight ≥40kg: 200 mg every other week
 - iv. Age 18 and older: 200 mg every other week
 - d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)
4. Active psoriatic arthritis (PsA)
- a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to a 3-month trial of at least **ONE** conventional DMARD (see Appendix 3)
 - c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)
5. Active ankylosing spondylitis (AS)
- a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to at least **TWO** non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
 - c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)
6. Moderate to severe plaque psoriasis (PsO)

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- a. 18 years of age or older
- b. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to either conventional systemic therapy (see Appendix 3) or phototherapy
 - i. If the patient is intolerant or contraindicated to one therapy then the patient must have an inadequate response, intolerance, or contraindication to the other treatment option
- c. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every other week
- d. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

AND ALL of the following for **ALL** indications:

1. Result for latent TB infection is negative **OR** result was positive for latent TB and patient completed treatment (or is receiving treatment) for latent TB
2. Patient is not at risk for HBV infection **OR** patient is at risk for HBV infection and HBV infection has been ruled out or treatment for HBV infection has been initiated.
3. Absence of active infection [including tuberculosis and hepatitis B virus (HBV)]
4. **NOT** to be used in combination with any other biologic DMARD or targeted synthetic DMARD (see Appendix 3)
5. **NOT** given concurrently with live vaccines

All approved requests are subject to review by a clinical specialist for final validation and coverage determination once all required documentation has been received. Current utilization, including samples, does not guarantee approval of coverage.

Diagnosis

Patient must have the following:

1. Active non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Patient has objective signs of inflammation

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- c. Inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to at least **TWO** non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- d. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks

AND ALL of the following:

- 1. Result for latent TB infection is negative **OR** result was positive for latent TB and patient completed treatment (or is receiving treatment) for latent TB
- 2. Patient is not at risk for HBV infection **OR** patient is at risk for HBV infection and HBV infection has been ruled out or treatment for HBV infection has been initiated.
- 3. Absence of active infection [including tuberculosis and hepatitis B virus (HBV)]
- 4. **NOT** to be used in combination with any other biologic DMARD or targeted synthetic DMARD (see Appendix 3)
- 5. **NOT** given concurrently with live vaccines

Prior – Approval *Renewal* Requirements

Cimzia Lyophilized Powder submitted under the medical benefit is not subject to biologic step edits.

Diagnoses

Patient must have **ONE** of the following with provided documentation (e.g., medical records, laboratory reports):

- 1. Crohn's disease (CD)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)
- 2. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks

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- c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

- 3. Polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis (pJIA)
 - a. 2 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of the following:
 - i. Age 2-17, weight 10kg to < 20kg: 50 mg every other week
 - ii. Age 2-17, weight 20kg to < 40kg: 100 mg every other week
 - iii. Age 2-17, weight ≥40kg: 200 mg every other week
 - iv. Age 18 and older: 200 mg every other week
 - c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

- 4. Psoriatic arthritis (PsA)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

- 5. Ankylosing spondylitis (AS)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks
 - c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

- 6. Plaque psoriasis (PsO)
 - a. 18 years of age or older

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- b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every other week
- c. Patient **MUST** have tried the preferred product(s) (see Appendix 4) if adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit unless the patient has a valid medical exception (e.g., inadequate treatment response, intolerance, contraindication)

AND ALL of the following for **ALL** indications:

- 1. Condition has improved or stabilized with Cimzia
- 2. Absence of active infection [including tuberculosis and hepatitis B virus (HBV)]
- 3. **NOT** to be used in combination with any other biologic DMARD or targeted synthetic DMARD (see Appendix 3)
- 4. **NOT** given concurrently with live vaccines

All approved requests are subject to review by a clinical specialist for final validation and coverage determination once all required documentation has been received. Current utilization, including samples, does not guarantee approval of coverage.

Diagnosis

Patient must have the following:

- 1. Non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA)
 - a. 18 years of age or older
 - b. Prescriber will not exceed the FDA labeled maintenance dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks

AND ALL of the following:

- 1. Condition has improved or stabilized with Cimzia
- 2. Absence of active infection [including tuberculosis and hepatitis B virus (HBV)]
- 3. **NOT** to be used in combination with any other biologic DMARD or targeted synthetic DMARD (see Appendix 3)
- 4. **NOT** given concurrently with live vaccines

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Pre - PA Allowance

None

Prior - Approval Limits

Quantity

Diagnosis	Starter Pack	Strength	Quantity
Ankylosing Spondylitis	Yes	200 mg	1 starter pack and 6 units per 84 days
Crohn's Disease			
Psoriatic Arthritis			
Rheumatoid Arthritis			
Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis			
Plaque Psoriasis	Yes	200 mg	1 starter pack and 12 units per 84 days
Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis	Yes	200 mg	1 starter pack and 6 units per 84 days

Duration 12 months

Prior – Approval *Renewal* Limits

Quantity

Diagnosis	Strength	Quantity
Ankylosing Spondylitis	200 mg	6 units per 84 days
Crohn's Disease		
Psoriatic Arthritis		
Rheumatoid Arthritis		
Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis		
Plaque Psoriasis	200 mg	12 units per 84 days
Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis	200 mg	6 units per 84 days

Duration 18 months

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Rationale

Summary

Cimzia (certolizumab pegol) is a tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blocker indicated for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis (pJIA), psoriatic arthritis (PsA), plaque psoriasis (PsO), ankylosing spondylitis (AS), non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis (nr-axSpA), and Crohn's disease (CD). Cimzia may be used as monotherapy or concurrently with non-biological disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Cimzia should not be used in combination with other biological DMARDs or other tumor necrosis factor (TNF) blockers. Cimzia carries boxed warnings regarding increased risk of serious infections and malignancies. The safety and effectiveness of Cimzia in pediatric patients less than 2 years of age for polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis have not been established. The safety and effectiveness of Cimzia in pediatric patients less than 18 years of age for all other indications have not been established (1).

Prior authorization is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of Cimzia while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

References

1. Cimzia [package insert]. Smyrna, GA: UCB, Inc.; September 2025.

Policy History

Date	Action
October 2013	Addition to PA
December 2013	Annual editorial review by the PMPC
September 2014	Annual editorial review and renewal limit to 18 months
December 2015	Annual editorial review and removed moderated to severely active from renewal diagnoses
September 2016	Annual review and reference update Addition of not given concurrently with live vaccines per SME Policy number change 5.18.05 to 5.50.11
December 2016	Annual editorial review
March 2017	Annual review
December 2017	Annual editorial review and reference update Addition of prescriber will be dosing the patient within the FDA labeled dose of 400 mg every 4 weeks

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March 2018	Annual editorial review and reference update Addition of List of DMARDs appendix
June 2018	Addition of the diagnosis of plaque psoriasis Addition of additional requirements to initiation criteria For diagnoses of RA: Inadequate response, intolerance, or contraindication to a 3-month trial of at least ONE conventional DMARD For diagnoses of CD: inadequate treatment response, intolerance, or contraindication to at least one conventional systemic therapy For diagnosis of AS: inadequate response, intolerance, or contraindication to at least 2 NSAIDs For diagnosis of PsA: inadequate response, intolerance or contraindication to a 3-month trial of at least ONE conventional DMARD Addition of List of Conventional Therapies, and Examples of Contraindications to Methotrexate appendices
September 2018	Annual editorial review and reference update
March 2019	Annual review
April 2019	Addition of indication: non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis
June 2019	Annual review
September 2019	Annual review and reference update
December 2019	Annual review. Addition of requirement to trial preferred product
March 2020	Annual review and reference update
September 2020	Annual review
December 2020	Added Appendix 4 with a list of preferred medications based on diagnosis and plan. Added PA quantity limits
January 2021	Updated t/f options for CD to include trial of Humira first per FEP
March 2021	Annual editorial review. Clarification added to the t/f, intolerance, C/I to preferred products requirement indicating that it only applies to claims adjudicated through the pharmacy benefit. Updated Appendix 3.
June 2021	Annual editorial review
January 2022	Added Rinvoq as a preferred PsA product to chart (Appendix 4)
March 2022	Annual review. Added Skyrizi as a preferred PsA product to chart (Appendix 4)
May 2022	Added Rinvoq as a preferred AS product to chart (Appendix 4)
June 2022	Annual review
July 2022	Added Skyrizi as a preferred CD product to chart (Appendix 4). Also, added that Cimzia Lyophilized Powder submitted under the medical benefit is not subject to biologic step edits
September 2022	Annual review
December 2022	Annual review
March 2023	Annual review and reference update
June 2023	Annual review
March 2024	Annual editorial review. Revised FDA dosing language
June 2024	Annual review

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September 2024	Annual review
October 2024	Per PI update, added indication of pJIA
December 2024	Annual review
March 2025	Annual review
December 2025	Annual review. Revised Appendix 4. Added documentation requirement
March 2026	Annual review and reference update

[Keywords](#)

This policy was approved by the FEP® Pharmacy and Medical Policy Committee on March 6, 2026 and is effective on April 1, 2026.

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Appendix 1 - List of Conventional Therapies

Conventional Therapy Options for CD
1. Mild to moderate disease – induction of remission: a. Oral budesonide, oral mesalamine b. Alternatives: metronidazole, ciprofloxacin
2. Mild to moderate disease – maintenance of remission: a. Azathioprine, mercaptopurine b. Alternatives: oral budesonide, methotrexate intramuscularly (IM)
3. Moderate to severe disease – induction of remission: a. Prednisone, methylprednisolone intravenously (IV) b. Alternatives: methotrexate IM
4. Moderate to severe disease – maintenance of remission: a. Azathioprine, mercaptopurine b. Alternative: methotrexate IM
5. Perianal and fistulizing disease – induction of remission c. Metronidazole ± ciprofloxacin
6. Perianal and fistulizing disease – maintenance of remission d. Azathioprine, mercaptopurine e. Alternative: methotrexate IM

Appendix 2 – Examples of Contraindications to Methotrexate

Contraindications to Methotrexate
1. Alcoholism, alcoholic liver disease or other chronic liver disease
2. Breastfeeding
3. Blood dyscrasias (e.g., thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, significant anemia)
4. Elevated liver transaminases
5. History of intolerance or adverse event
6. Hypersensitivity
7. Interstitial pneumonitis or clinically significant pulmonary fibrosis
8. Myelodysplasia
9. Pregnancy or planning pregnancy (male or female)
10. Renal impairment
11. Significant drug interaction

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Appendix 3 - List of DMARDs

Conventional disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)

Generic Name	Brand Name
azathioprine	Azasan, Imuran
cyclophosphamide	Cytoxan
cyclosporine	Neoral, Gengraf, Sandimmune
hydroxychloroquine	Plaquenil
leflunomide	Arava
methotrexate	Rheumatrex, Trexall
mycophenolate	Cellcept
sulfasalazine	Azulfidine, Sulfazine

Biological disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)

Generic Name	Brand Name
abatacept	Orencia
adalimumab	Humira
anakinra	Kineret
bimekizumab-bkzx	Bimzelx
brodalumab	Siliq
certolizumab	Cimzia
etanercept	Enbrel
golimumab	Simponi/Simponi Aria
guselkumab	Tremfya
infliximab	Remicade
infliximab-dyyb	Zymfentra
ixekizumab	Taltz
risankizumab-rzaa	Skyrizi
rituximab	Rituxan
sarilumab	Kevzara
secukinumab	Cosentyx
spesolimab-sbzo	Spevigo
tildrakizumab-asmn	Ilumya
tocilizumab	Actemra
ustekinumab	Stelara
vedolizumab	Entyvio

Targeted synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs)

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Generic Name	Brand Name
apremilast	Otezla
baricitinib	Olumiant
deucravacitinib	Sotyktu
tofacitinib	Xeljanz/XR
upadactinib	Rinvoq

Appendix 4 - List of Preferred Products

List of preferred products:

https://info.caremark.com/content/dam/enterprise/caremark/microsites/dig/pdfs/pa-fep/fep-misc/FEP_IndicationMedChx.pdf

Refer to formulary documents for confirmation of coverage:

<https://www.fepblue.org/pharmacy/prescriptions#drug-lists>