



## **RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM**

### **Background**

The selective serotonin receptor agonists, or “triptans”, are a class of medications that have the ability to stop a migraine. Triptans work by binding to serotonin receptors in the brain. Specifically, per Drug Facts and Comparisons pharmacology of the Serotonin 5-HT<sub>1</sub> Receptor Agonists (Triptans): The vascular 5-HT<sub>1</sub> receptor subtype is present on the human basilar artery and in the vasculature of isolated human dura mater. Current theories on the etiology of migraine headaches suggest that symptoms are caused by local cranial vasodilation or the release of vasoactive and proinflammatory peptides from sensory nerve endings in an activated trigeminal system. The therapeutic activity of the serotonin 5-HT<sub>1</sub> receptor agonists in migraine most likely can be attributed to agonist effects at 5-HT<sub>1B/1D</sub> receptors on the extracerebral, intracranial blood vessels that become dilated during a migraine attack and on nerve terminals in the trigeminal system. Activation of these receptors results in cranial vessel constriction, inhibition of neuropeptide release, and reduced transmission in trigeminal pain pathways (1).

### **Regulatory Status**

FDA-approved indication: Maxalt is a serotonin (5-HT) 1B/1D receptor agonist (triptan) indicated for the acute treatment of migraine with or without aura in adults and in pediatric patients 6 to 17 years of age (2).

### **Limitations of Use: (2)**

- Use only after clear diagnosis of migraine has been established.
- Not indicated for the prophylactic therapy of migraine.
- Not indicated for the treatment of cluster headache.

This class of medications has potentially serious side effects, especially when taken in high doses. Life-threatening disturbances of cardiac rhythm and myocardial infarction have been reported, as well as stroke. Excessive use of triptans can lead to medication overuse headache (MOH) (2).

Maxalt is contraindicated in patient with: history of ischemic coronary artery disease or other significant underlying cardiovascular disease, history of coronary artery vasospasm, history of stroke or transient ischemic attack, peripheral vascular disease, ischemic bowel disease, uncontrolled



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## **MAXALT / MAXALT-MLT (rizatriptan)**

hypertension, recent use (within 24 hours) of another 5HT<sub>1</sub> agonist, ergotamine-containing medication, hemiplegic or basilar migraine, concurrent use or recent discontinuation (within 2 weeks) of a MAO-I inhibitor, and hypersensitivity to Maxalt or Maxalt-MLT (2).

### **Summary**

Maxalt is indicated for the acute treatment of migraine with or without aura in adults and in pediatric patients 6 to 17 years of age. Maxalt is not indicated for the prophylactic therapy of migraine or the treatment of cluster headaches. This class of medications has potentially serious side effects, especially when taken in high doses. Life-threatening disturbances of cardiac rhythm and myocardial infarction have been reported, as well as stroke (2).

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

### **References**

1. Serotonin 5-HT<sub>1</sub> Receptor Agonists (Tryptans). Drug Facts and Comparisons. Facts & Comparisons [database online]. St. Louis, MO: Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc; December 2017.
2. Maxalt / Maxalt-MLT [Package Insert]. Jersey City, NJ: Organon LLC; June 2021.