



**BlueCross
BlueShield**

Federal Employee Program.

RITUXAN HYCELA
(rituximab and hyaluronidase human)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Rituxan Hycela (rituximab and hyaluronidase human) is a monoclonal antibody that is manufactured through biotechnology methods rather than by the body's own immune system. The drug works by reducing the number of specific immune cells in the blood, known as B-cells. The drug binds to a particular protein, the CD20 antigen, on the surface of normal and malignant B-cells, making it easier for the patient's immune system to attack the cancer cell as if it were a foreign pathogen. Rituxan Hycela is used in the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), a slowly progressing blood and bone marrow cancer that arises from a group of white blood cells known as B-cells, in the treatment of CD20 positive, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL), which is a type of cancer that occurs in B-cells (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indications: Rituxan Hycela is a combination of rituximab, a CD20-directed cytolytic antibody, and hyaluronidase human, an endoglycosidase, indicated for the treatment of adult patients with: (1)

1. Follicular Lymphoma (FL)
 - a. Relapsed or refractory, follicular lymphoma as a single agent
 - b. Previously untreated follicular lymphoma in combination with first line chemotherapy and, in patients achieving a complete or partial response to rituximab in combination with chemotherapy, as single-agent maintenance therapy
 - c. Non-progressing (including stable disease), follicular lymphoma as a single agent after first-line cyclophosphamide, vincristine, and prednisone (CVP) chemotherapy
2. Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma (DLBCL)
 - a. Previously untreated diffuse large B-cell lymphoma in combination with cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine, prednisone (CHOP) or other anthracycline-based chemotherapy regimens
3. Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)
 - a. Previously untreated and previously treated CLL in combination with fludarabine and cyclophosphamide (FC)

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Limitations of Use:

Initiate treatment with Rituxan Hycela only after patients have received at least one full dose of a rituximab product by intravenous infusion. Rituxan Hycela is not indicated for the treatment of non-malignant conditions (1).

Rituxan Hycela has several boxed warnings regarding severe mucocutaneous reactions, Hepatitis B virus (HBV) reactivation can occur, in some cases resulting in fulminant hepatitis, hepatic failure, and progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) resulting in death (1).

Acute renal failure, hyperkalemia, hypocalcemia, hyperuricemia, or hyperphosphatemia from tumor lysis, some fatal, can occur. Patients at high risk for tumor lysis syndrome should be administered aggressive intravenous hydration, anti-hyperuricemic agents, and their renal function should be monitored (1).

Serious, including fatal, bacterial, fungal, and new or reactivated viral infections can occur during and following the completion of Rituxan Hycela-based therapy. Discontinue Rituxan Hycela for serious infections and institute appropriate anti-infective therapy (1).

The safety of immunization with live viral vaccines following Rituxan Hycela therapy has not been studied and vaccination with live virus vaccines is not recommended (1).

In patients with lymphoid malignancies, during treatment with Rituxan Hycela monotherapy, obtain complete blood counts (CBC) and platelet counts prior to each Rituxan Hycela course. During treatment with Rituxan Hycela and chemotherapy, obtain CBC and platelet counts at weekly to monthly intervals and more frequently in patients who develop cytopenias (1).

The safety and effectiveness of Rituxan Hycela in patients less than 18 years of age have not been established (1).

Summary

Rituxan Hycela is a monoclonal antibody that is manufactured through biotechnology methods

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rather than by the human body's own immune system. The drug works by greatly reducing the number of specific immune cells in the blood, known as B-cells. The drug binds to a particular protein, the CD20 antigen, on the surface of normal and malignant B-cells, making it easier for the patient's immune system to attack the cancer cell as if it were a foreign pathogen. Rituxan Hycela is therefore used to treat diseases which are characterized by excessive numbers of B cells, overactive B cells, or dysfunctional B cells. This includes non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL), chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), microscopic polyangiitis (MPA), and granulomatosis with polyangiitis (1).

Prior authorization is required to ensure the safe, clinically appropriate, and cost-effective use of Rituxan Hycela (rituximab) while maintaining optimal therapeutic outcomes.

References

1. Rituxan Hycela [package insert]. South San Francisco, CA: Genentech Inc.; June 2021.
2. NCCN Drugs & Biologics Compendium® Rituximab and hyaluronidase human 2025. National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Inc. Accessed on January 14, 2025.