



**BlueCross
BlueShield**

Federal Employee Program.

VELCADE (bortezomib)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Velcade targets proteasomes inside cells and blocks or slows down the action of these cells. Proteasomes break down proteins in both healthy and cancerous cells. Once this activity is blocked or slowed down then the proteins build up causing an imbalance within the cell. Cancer cells divide and multiply faster than most other cells. Velcade slows this process and causes cancer cell death (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indications: Velcade is a proteasome inhibitor indicated for (1):

- treatment of adult patients with multiple myeloma.
- treatment of adult patients with mantle cell lymphoma.

Velcade SC is also indicated for the treatment of adult patients with newly diagnosed light chain (AL) amyloidosis in combination with daratumumab/hyaluronidase-fihj, cyclophosphamide and dexamethasone (2).

Velcade is contraindicated for intrathecal administration. Fatal events have occurred with intrathecal administration of Velcade (1).

Patients should be monitored for cardiac toxicity, pulmonary toxicity, thrombocytopenia or neutropenia, tumor lysis syndrome, hepatic toxicity, and thrombotic microangiopathy. Caution should be used when prescribing for patients with peripheral neuropathy, hypotension, and gastrointestinal toxicity. Patients with posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome should consider MRI imaging for onset of visual or neurological symptoms. Women should avoid getting pregnant while on this medication (1).

Patients being treated for light chain (AL) amyloidosis should be treated with Velcade SC until disease progression, unacceptable toxicity or a maximum of 2 years (2).

The safety and effectiveness of Velcade in pediatric patients have not been established (1).

Summary



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Velcade targets proteasomes inside cells and blocks or slows down the action of these cells. Once this activity is blocked or slowed down then the proteins build up causing an imbalance within the cell. This disruption of normal homeostatic mechanisms can lead to cell death. The safety and effectiveness of Velcade in patients under the age of 18 has not been established (1).

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

References

1. Velcade [package insert]. Lexington, MA: Takeda Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.; August 2022.
2. Darzalex Faspro [package insert]. Horsham, PA: Janssen Biotech, Inc.; November 2022.
3. NCCN Drugs & Biologics Compendium® Bortezomib 2024. National Comprehensive Cancer Network, Inc. Accessed on November 8, 2024.