BlueCross BlueShield
Federal Employee Program

POTASSIUM BINDERS
Lokelma (sodium zirconium cyclosilicate), Veltassa (patiromer)

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Lokelma (sodium zirconium cyclosilicate) and Veltassa (patiromer) are potassium binders used to treat hyperkalemia, a serious condition in which the amount of potassium in the blood is too high. The level of serum potassium is affected by several body systems, but the kidneys are the primary organ regulating blood potassium levels. When the kidneys are not able to remove enough potassium from the blood, the level of potassium can get too high. Hyperkalemia typically occurs in patients with acute or chronic kidney disease or heart failure, particularly in those who are taking drugs that inhibit the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS), which regulates blood pressure and fluid balance in the body. Strategies to control chronic hyperkalemia include dietary potassium restriction; discontinuation of potassium supplements, certain salt substitutes, and hyperkalemic drugs; adding potassium-wasting diuretics, and oral potassium binders. The 2021 Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) Clinical Practical Guideline for the Management of Blood Pressure in Chronic Kidney Disease advises that hyperkalemia in chronic kidney disease patients receiving RAAS blockade agents can be controlled with potassium binders rather than decreasing the dose or stopping RAAS therapy (1-3).

Lokelma and Veltassa work by binding potassium in the gastrointestinal tract, decreasing its absorption. Lokelma and Veltassa should not be used as an emergency treatment for life-threatening hyperkalemia because of its delayed onset of action (1-2).

Regulatory Status

FDA-approved indications: Lokelma and Veltassa are potassium binders indicated for the treatment of hyperkalemia (1-2).

<u>Limitations of Use:</u>

Lokelma and Veltassa should not be used as an emergency treatment for life-threatening hyperkalemia because of the delayed onset of action (1-2).

Lokelma and Veltassa could decrease the absorption of other medications and reduce their effectiveness. Administer other oral medications at least 3 hours before or 3 hours after Veltassa and 2 hours before or 2 hours after Lokelma (1-2).

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The recommended starting dose of Veltassa is 8.4 grams once daily for adults and 4 grams once daily for pediatric patients 12 to 17 years of age. Monitor serum potassium and adjust the dose of Veltassa based on the serum potassium level and the desired target range. The dose may be increased or decreased, as necessary, to reach the desired serum potassium concentration, up to a maximum dose of 25.2 grams once daily. The dose can be up-titrated based on serum potassium level at 1-week or longer intervals, in increments of 8.4 grams for adults and 4 grams for pediatric patients 12 to 17 years of age (2).

The recommended starting dose of Lokelma is 10 grams (orally as a suspension in water) administered three times a day for up to 48 hours. For maintenance treatment, recommended dose is 10 grams once daily. Adjust dose at one-week intervals as needed (by 5 grams daily) to obtain desired serum potassium target. Maximum dosage of Lokelma is 15 grams daily (1).

Avoid use of Lokelma and Veltassa in patients with severe constipation, bowel obstruction or impaction, including abnormal post-operative bowel motility disorders, because Lokelma and Veltassa have not been studied in patients with these conditions and may be ineffective and may worsen gastrointestinal conditions (1-2).

Safety and efficacy of Lokelma in pediatric patients have not been established. Safety and efficacy of Veltassa in patients under 12 years of age have not been established (1-2).

Summary

Lokelma and Veltassa are indicated for the treatment of hyperkalemia. Monitor serum potassium and adjust the dose of Lokelma and Veltassa based on the serum potassium level and the desired target range. Lokelma and Veltassa should not be used as an emergency treatment for life threatening hyperkalemia because of the delayed onset of action. Lokelma and Veltassa may affect other medicines taken by mouth if they are taken too close together. Safety and efficacy of Lokelma in pediatric patients and Veltassa in patients under 12 years of age have not been established (1-2).

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

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References

1. Lokelma [package insert]. Wilmington, DE: AstraZeneca, Inc.; February 2024.
2. Veltassa [package insert]. Redwood City, CA: Vifor Pharma, Inc.; October 2023.
3. *Kidney supplement to - KDIGO*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2021, from https://kdigo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/KDIGO-2021-BP-GL.pdf.