



**VFEND
(voriconazole)**

RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION IN PA PROGRAM

Background

Vfend (voriconazole) is a potent “azole” antifungal medication. Azole antifungal medications work by inhibiting fungal ergosterol biosynthesis (ergosterol is a component of fungal cell membranes). Specifically, voriconazole disrupts the specific fungal enzyme which is crucial in making ergosterol, thereby destroying the fungal cell wall. Voriconazole is used in the treatment of fungal infections including: invasive aspergillosis, Candidemia in nonneutropenics and other deep tissue Candida infections, Scedosporiosis and Fusariosis infections, and esophageal candidiasis (1).

Regulatory Status

FDA approved indications: Vfend is an azole antifungal indicated for use in the treatment of: (1)

1. Invasive aspergillosis
2. Candidemia (nonneutropenics) and disseminated candidiasis in skin, abdomen, kidney, bladder wall, and wounds
3. Esophageal candidiasis
4. Serious infections caused by *Scedosporium apiospermum* and *Fusarium* species including *Fusarium solani*, in patients intolerant of, or refractory to, other therapy

Off-Label Uses: (2)

1. Use in select (high risk) neutropenic cancer patients for antifungal prophylaxis

Vfend has many warnings and precautions including: clinically significant drug interactions, hepatic toxicity, visual disturbances (especially with extended use), embryo-fetal toxicity, arrhythmias and QT prolongation, infusion related reactions (including anaphylaxis), dermatological reactions, and skeletal events (with long term use). Baseline transaminase levels and bilirubin should be measured at the initiation of Vfend therapy and monitored frequently throughout the duration of therapy (weekly for the first month, and monthly thereafter) (1).

Vfend (voriconazole) comes in three main dosage forms: a film coated tablet, a powder for suspension (oral), and a powder for solution (for IV injection). There is no FDA approved indication for use of this compound in any other form, including topically, or via inhalation (1).

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) recommends that serum trough drug levels be



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obtained for azole antifungal agents such as Vfend (voriconazole) to optimize therapeutic efficacy and to avoid potential toxicity (3).

Safety and effectiveness in patients less than 12 years of age have not been established (1).

Summary

Vfend (voriconazole) is a potent “azole” antifungal medication. Voriconazole is used in the treatment of fungal infections including: invasive aspergillosis, Candidemia in nonneutropenics and other deep tissue Candida infections, Scedosporiosis and Fusariosis infections, and esophageal candidiasis. Voriconazole is also used off-label as an alternative therapy in the prevention of invasive fungal infections in immunocompromised patients, such as high-risk neutropenic patients with cancer. Vfend (voriconazole) comes in three main dosage forms: a film coated tablet, a powder for suspension (oral), and a powder for solution (for IV injection). There is no FDA approved indication for use of this compound in any other form, including topically, or via inhalation (1-2).

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

References

1. Vfend [package insert]. New York, NY: Pfizer, Inc.; October 2022.
2. Freifeld AG, Bow EJ, Sepkowitz KA, et al.; Infectious Diseases Society of America. Clinical practice guideline for the use of antimicrobial agents in neutropenic patients with cancer: 2010 update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Clin Infect Dis. 2011;52(4).
3. Patterson, T.F., et al. Practice Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Aspergillosis: 2016 Update by the Infectious Disease Society of America. Clinical Infectious Diseases, Volume 63, Issue 4, 15 August 2016, Pages e1-e60.