

# Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont and The Vermont Health Plan

## Emend® (Aprepitant)

### Prior Approval Guidelines

**DESCRIPTION:** Emend (aprepitant) is the first of a new class of antiemetic agents. Aprepitant prevents the interaction of substance P at neurokinin-1 (NK<sub>1</sub>) receptors resulting in inhibition of nausea and emesis. Aprepitant does not have any affinity for the 5HT<sub>3</sub> receptor.

**INDICATION(S):** For the treatment of acute or delayed nausea and vomiting associated with highly emetogenic chemotherapy regimens. Please note aprepitant is only FDA approved for use in combination with a 5HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist **and** a corticosteroid in adults.

**REASONS FOR PA:**  Cost  Potential for misuse  Toxicity

**CRITERIA for APPROVAL:**

1. Patient, age 18 or older is receiving highly emetogenic chemotherapy  
**AND**
2. Patient has been treated with a 5HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist in combination with a corticosteroid for one cycle of chemotherapy  
**AND**
3. Patient experienced acute and/or delayed nausea and vomiting  
**AND**
4. Prescriber is an oncologist  
**AND**
5. Prescriber understands Emend is only to be given in combination with a 5HT<sub>3</sub> antagonist and a corticosteroid regimen and has ensured patient has these medications available

**REASONS for DENIAL of BENEFIT:**

1. Intended use is not for highly emetogenic chemotherapy
2. Patient is currently taking Orap<sup>™</sup> (pimozide)
3. Safety in Children has not been established, not recommended in patients under the age of 18.
4. Patient does not meet above criteria

**RENEWAL CRITERIA:** Review of past 6 months demonstrates minimal to no episodes of nausea or emesis post chemotherapy

**BENEFIT APPROVAL:** Initial approval for a period of 3 months with a quantity limit of 6 capsules.  
Renewal approval period: 3 months

**References:**

1. Emend (Aprepitant) Prescribing Information, Merck & Co., Inc. Whitehouse Station, NJ. May 2003.
2. ASHP Therapeutic Guidelines on the Pharmacologic Management of Nausea and Vomiting in Adult and Pediatric Patients Receiving Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy or Undergoing Surgery. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm* 1999;56:729-54.
3. Some Drugs for Chemotherapy-Induced Vomiting. *The Medical Letter* 2003;45(issue 1162).

