

## **STEP THERAPY POLICY**

**POLICY:** Topical Acne – Topical Products Step Therapy Policy

Note: This is not an all-inclusive list.

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## OVERVIEW

All of these products are indicated for use in the management of **acne vulgaris**.<sup>1,2</sup> Some of the benzoyl peroxide-containing products are available over-the-counter (OTC) and these products are generally indicated for the treatment or prevention of mild to moderate acne vulgaris. Sulfacetamide sodium and sulfur are used together to treat acne vulgaris; sulfacetamide is an antimicrobial and sulfur is an antimicrobial and a keratolytic agent that causes a peeling and drying effect. In addition to being indicated for the treatment of acne, sulfacetamide/sulfur products are used for acne rosacea and seborrheic dermatitis. Please refer to the product labeling for specific details.

The topical products for treatment of acne are available in multiple formulations.<sup>1,2</sup> Creams and lotions may be best for dry or sensitive skin and gels or foams may be best for more oily skin (although newer aqueous gels may also be suitable for sensitive skin).<sup>3</sup>

Acne treatment guidelines do not prefer any of the specific brand name agents over similar products available as generics for the treatment of acne.<sup>3</sup> Acne management should focus on preventing formation of microcomedones and minimizing the potential for visible acne lesions.<sup>1,2</sup> The combination of a topical retinoid and benzoyl peroxide remains the preferred approach for almost all patients with acne. Unlike other topical antibiotics, benzoyl peroxide has not been associated with the development of antibiotic resistance.

## POLICY STATEMENT

This program has been developed to encourage the use of a Step 1 Product prior to the use of a Step 2 Product. If the Step Therapy rule is not met for a Step 2 Product at the point of service, coverage will be determined by the Step Therapy criteria below. All approvals are provided for 1 year in duration.

Note: For the purpose of this policy, a topical acne product is defined as a gel, cream, lotion, solution/pledget, pad, foam, or ointment.

**Automation:** A patient with a of one Step 1 Product within the 130-day look-back period is excluded from Step Therapy.

**Step 1:** Generic prescription topical adapalene-, benzoyl peroxide-, clindamycin products other than generic Clindagel, dapsone-, erythromycin-, sodium sulfacetamide-, or sodium sulfacetamide/sulfur-containing products

**Step 2:** Brand name prescription topical acne products: Akliel, Amzeeq, Azelex, or brand name topical acne products containing adapalene (e.g., Differin), benzoyl peroxide (e.g., Inova Easy Pad), clindamycin (e.g., Cleocin T, Evoclin), dapsone (e.g., Aczone), erythromycin (e.g., Erygel), sulfacetamide (e.g., Klaron), sulfacetamide/sulfur (e.g., Avar-e, Avar-e LS), or combinations containing these active ingredients (e.g., Acanya, Benzamycin, Cabtreo, Epiduo [brand], Twyneo, Ziana, Veltin), generic adapalene swabs, generic Clindagel

## CRITERIA

1. If the patient has tried one Step 1 Product, approve a Step 2 Product.
2. No other exceptions are recommended.

## REFERENCES

1. Facts and Comparisons® Online. Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc.; 2023. Available at: <http://fco.factsandcomparisons.com/lco/action/home>. Accessed on August 31, 2023. Search terms: benzoyl peroxide, clindamycin, minocycline, sulfacetamide/sulfur, Twynéo.
2. Clinical Pharmacology © 2023. Available at <https://www.clinicalkey.com/pharmacology/>. Accessed on August 31, 2023. Search terms: benzoyl peroxide and sulfur/sulfacetamide.
3. Thiboutot DM, Dreno B, Abanmi A, et al. Practical management of acne for clinicians: an international consensus from the Global Alliance to Improve Outcomes in Acne. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2018;78:S1-S23.