

Information about ivermectin use

Effective Feb. 15, 2022, Humana will require pharmacies to enter a diagnosis code supplied by the prescriber when processing a claim for ivermectin tablets for Humana members. Please include the diagnosis on the ivermectin prescription to minimize delays in dispensing the medication.

Ivermectin is a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved prescription drug that, at very specific doses, is used to treat certain types of infections caused by internal and external parasites in humans. Certain ivermectin formulations are approved in the U.S. to treat and prevent parasites in animals.

Ivermectin is not authorized or approved by the FDA for prevention or treatment of COVID-19. Clinical trials evaluating the use of ivermectin for COVID-19 treatment in humans have resulted in insufficient evidence to support this use. Ivermectin use for COVID-19 treatment is not supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) COVID-19 treatment guidelines or the Infectious Diseases Society of America guidelines.⁴

Ivermectin is generally well tolerated when used in appropriate doses for approved indications, but animal ivermectin formulations have not been evaluated for use in humans. The use of ivermectin above FDA-recommended doses may cause toxic effects.² According to recent studies, there has been an increase in the dispensing of ivermectin by retail pharmacies and the use of veterinary ivermectin formulations available over the counter that are not intended for human use. The FDA also has received multiple reports of patients who have required medical attention, including hospitalization, after self-medicating with ivermectin intended for animal use.²

The CDC recommends physicians do the following:¹

- Be aware that ivermectin is not currently authorized or approved by the FDA for treatment of COVID-19, and the NIH has determined there is currently insufficient data to recommend ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19.³
- Educate patients about the risks of using ivermectin without a prescription or ingesting ivermectin formulations intended for external use or ivermectin-containing products formulated for veterinary use.
- Advise patients to immediately seek medical treatment if they have taken ivermectin or ivermectin-containing products and are experiencing symptoms. Signs and symptoms of ivermectin toxicity include headache, blurred vision, dizziness, tachycardia, hypotension, visual hallucinations, altered mental status, confusion, loss of coordination and balance, central nervous system depression, seizures and gastrointestinal effects (nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea). Patients should call the Poison Control Centers hotline at 800-222-1222 for medical management advice.
- Educate patients on the importance of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is safe and the most effective means to prevent infection and protect against severe disease and death from SARS-CoV-2.
- Educate patients to use COVID-19 prevention measures, including wearing masks in indoor public places, physical distancing by staying at least six feet from other people who don't live in the same household, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

References:

1. "Rapid Increase in Ivermectin Prescriptions and Reports of Severe Illness Associated with Use of Products Containing Ivermectin to Prevent or Treat COVID-19," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Aug. 26, 2021, last accessed Dec. 16, 2021, https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/pdf/CDC_HAN_449.pdf.
2. "Why You Should Not Use Ivermectin to Treat or Prevent COVID-19," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, last accessed Dec. 16, 2021, <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/why-you-should-not-use-ivermectin-treat-or-prevent-covid-19>.
3. "Ivermectin – COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines," The National Institutes of Health, last accessed Dec. 16, 2021, <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/therapies/antiviral-therapy/ivermectin/>.
4. "Guidelines on the Treatment and Management of Patients with COVID-19," Infectious Diseases Society of America, last accessed Dec. 16, 2021, <https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/covid-19-guideline-treatment-and-management>.