**Medication Policy Manual**

**Policy No:** dru338

**Topic:** branded nasal corticosteroid-containing products:
- Beconase AQ®
- Dymista®
- Nasonex®
- Omnaris®
- Qnasl®
- Rhinocort Aqua®
- Veramyst®
- Zetonna®

**Date of Origin:** March 14, 2014

**Committee Approval Date:** February 17, 2015

**Next Review Date:** February 2016

**Effective Date:** March 1, 2015

**IMPORTANT REMINDER**

This Medical Policy has been developed through consideration of medical necessity, generally accepted standards of medical practice, and review of medical literature and government approval status.

Benefit determinations should be based in all cases on the applicable contract language. To the extent there are any conflicts between these guidelines and the contract language, the contract language will control.

The purpose of medical policy is to provide a guide to coverage. Medical Policy is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care.

**Description**

Beconase AQ, Nasonex, Omnaris, Qnasl, Rhinocort Aqua, Veramyst and Zetonna are inhaled nasal corticosteroids (sprays and aerosols) used to treat nasal allergy symptoms. Fluticasone/azelastine nasal spray (Dymista) is a combination inhaled corticosteroid antihistamine nasal spray also used to treat nasal allergy symptoms.
Policy/Criteria

I. Most contracts require prior authorization approval of branded nasal corticosteroid-containing products prior to coverage. Branded nasal corticosteroid products may be considered medically necessary when two generic nasal corticosteroids (listed in Appendix 1) have been ineffective, contraindicated, or not tolerated.

II. Administration and Authorization Period
   A. RegenceRx considers branded nasal corticosteroid-containing products to be self-administered medications.
   B. Authorization may be reviewed at least annually to confirm that current medical necessity criteria are met and that the medication is effective.

Position Statement

- All nasal corticosteroid-containing products have similar efficacy and safety, as there is a lack of high confidence evidence to differentiate the products.
- For the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis, perennial allergic rhinitis or nasal polyps, there is no evidence demonstrating the superiority of one nasal corticosteroid-containing product over another.
- Generic options in the nasal corticosteroid class (flunisolide, fluticasone, and triamcinolone) provide the best value.
- Generic nasal corticosteroid-containing products have been well-studied and have a long track record of safety and efficacy with adults and children as young as age 2.

Clinical Efficacy

- There is no clear evidence supporting the superiority of one nasal corticosteroid-containing product over another in the treatment of seasonal or perennial allergic rhinitis. [1, 2]
- Nasal corticosteroids appear to offer superior symptom relief in allergic rhinitis compared to antihistamines. [2, 3]
- There is no evidence supporting the superiority of the branded combination product, azelastine/fluticasone propionate (Dymista), over generically available intranasal corticosteroid and antihistamine products. [2, 3]
- National (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, AAAAI) and International (British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology) allergic rhinitis guidelines consider all of the nasal corticosteroid products to have similar effectiveness. [4, 5]
Safety\[^{[2,4]}\]

- All nasal corticosteroids have similar side effect profiles.
- Studies in both children and adults have failed to demonstrate any consistent, clinically relevant effect from nasal corticosteroids on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, ocular pressure or cataract formation, or bone density.\[^{[2,4]}\]
- Nasal corticosteroids have been used during pregnancy. There is insufficient evidence that demonstrates that one nasal steroid is safer in pregnancy than another. Beclomethasone (Pregnancy Category C) and budesonide (Pregnancy Category B), and fluticasone propionate (Pregnancy Category C) have more accumulated safety data than triamcinolone, mometasone, and flunisolide,\[^{[4]}\] as well as ciclesonide.
- The most common side effects from nasal corticosteroids include local nasal irritation, sore throat and nose bleeds. Nasal antihistamines may have a bitter aftertaste and cause sedation.
- Proper administration technique may help to minimize side effects.

### Appendix 1: Generic Nasal Corticosteroid Product Alternatives

- flunisolide (generic Nasarel®)
- fluticasone propionate (generic Flonase® or OTC Flonase Allergy Relief)
- triamcinolone (generic Nasacort AQ® or OTC Nasacort Allergy 24 hr®)

OTC: over-the-counter, non-prescription

### Appendix 2: Subpopulation considerations for nasal corticosteroid-containing products\[^{[6]}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generically-available products</th>
<th>Age(^a)</th>
<th>Pregnancy category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flunisolide</td>
<td>≥ 6 years</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>fluticasone propionate</td>
<td>≥ 4 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triamcinolone</td>
<td>≥ 2 years</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branded products</th>
<th>Age(^a)</th>
<th>Pregnancy category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beconase AQ (beclomethasone)</td>
<td>≥ 6 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dymista (fluticasone propionate/azelastine)</td>
<td>≥12 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasonex (mometasone)</td>
<td>≥ 2 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnaris (ciclesonide)</td>
<td>≥ 6 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qnasl (beclomethasone aerosol)</td>
<td>≥4 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhinocort Aqua (budesonide)</td>
<td>≥ 6 years</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veramyst (fluticasone furoate)</td>
<td>≥ 2 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zetonna (ciclesonide aerosol)</td>
<td>≥12 years</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) FDA-approved for use in the listed age groups
## Cross References

None

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<th>Codes</th>
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## References