Interferon gamma (Actimmune) is functionally related to the other interferons, but is unique in its ability to activate phagocytes and generating of toxic oxygen metabolites within phagocytes. It is thought these metabolites are responsible for the intracellular killing of microorganisms.

Although not labelled indications, interferon gamma has been used in the treatment of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and has been studied for use in patients with chronic hepatitis C with fibrosis or cirrhosis. There is conflicting data regarding its effectiveness, if any, in treating IPF, with recent studies concluding that patients with IPF do not benefit from interferon gamma. Similarly, ineffectiveness in reducing fibrosis has been reported in studies of patients with chronic hepatitis C.

Approval Criteria: When a benefit, interferon gamma may be approved when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Interferon Gamma is to be used for reducing the frequency and severity of serious infections in members with Chronic Granulomatous Disease, or
2. Interferon Gamma is to be used to delaying the time to disease progression in members with severe, malignant osteoporosis.

Use of gamma interferon for disease states outside of its FDA-approved indications should be denied based on the lack of clinical data to support its effectiveness and/or safety in other conditions.

Duration of authorization:

If approved, up to a lifetime authorization may be granted.

References:


Pharmacy policies do not constitute medical advice, nor are they intended to govern physicians' prescribing or the practice of medicine. They are intended to reflect Highmark's coverage and reimbursement guidelines. Coverage may vary for individual members, based on the terms of the benefit contract.

Highmark retains the right to review and update its pharmacy policy at its sole discretion. These guidelines are the proprietary information of Highmark. Any sale, copying or dissemination of the pharmacy policies is prohibited; however, limited copying of pharmacy policies is permitted for individual use.