

## Policies Repository



**Policy Title** Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™)

**Policy Number** FS.CLIN.51

*Application of Pharmacy Policy is determined by benefits and contracts. Benefits may vary based on product line, group or contract. Some medications may be subject to precertification, age, gender or quantity edits. Individual member benefits must be verified.*

*This Pharmacy Policy document describes the status of pharmaceutical information and/or technology at the time the document was developed. Since that time, new information relating to drug efficacy, interactions, contraindications, dosage, administration routes, safety or FDA approval may have changed. If the Medical/Pharmacy Reviewer is aware of any new information on the subject of this document, please provide it promptly to the Medical/Pharmacy Policy Department. This information may include new FDA approved indications, withdrawals or other FDA alerts. This type of information is relevant not only when considering whether this Policy should be updated, but also when applying it to current requests for coverage.*

*Members are advised to use participating pharmacies in order to receive the highest level of benefits.*

**Policy** Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is indicated for the treatment of major depressive disorder.

The use of desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) requires prior authorization (ie, clinical pharmacy and/or Medical Director review).

**Policy Description**

**Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™)** is a selective serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI). Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) is the major active metabolite of the antidepressant drug venlafaxine. Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™) blocks the reuptake of serotonin and norepinephrine in the central nervous system allowing for potentiation of these neurotransmitters. The increased levels of serotonin and norepinephrine are thought to account for its clinical efficacy.

**Policy Guideline Inclusion**

**Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™)** is approved when there is a documentation of a diagnosis of major depressive disorder (MDD) and **one** of the following:

- Documentation of a trial and failure/intolerance to **two** of the following agents:
  - A bupropion-containing product
  - Citalopram
  - Escitalopram (Lexapro®)
  - Fluoxetine
  - Fluvoxamine
  - A paroxetine-containing product
  - Sertraline
  - A venlafaxine-containing product
- Documentation of stabilization from an institutional setting
- Documentation of current stabilization for over four weeks with corresponding dates

**Policy Guideline Exclusion**

**Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq™)** is denied when the following exclusion criterion is present:

- No documentation of a diagnosis of MDD and **one** of the following:
  - Documentation of a trial and failure/intolerance to **two** of the following agents:
    - A bupropion-containing product
    - Citalopram
    - Escitalopram (Lexapro®)
    - Fluoxetine
    - Fluvoxamine
    - A paroxetine-containing product
    - Sertraline
    - A venlafaxine-containing product
  - Documentation of stabilization from an institutional setting
  - Documentation of current stabilization for over four weeks with corresponding dates

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**Policy List of Applicable Drugs**

| Brand Name | Generic Name   |
|------------|----------------|
| Pristiq    | desvenlafaxine |

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**Dosing and Administration**

Refer to the specific manufacturer's prescribing information for administration and dosage details, contraindications, and Black Box warnings.

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**Policy References**

1. DeMartinis NA, Yeung PP, Entsuah R, et al. A double blind placebo-controlled study of the efficacy and safety of desvenlafaxine succinate in the treatment of major depressive disorder. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2007; 68:5: 677-688.
2. Liebowitz MR, Yeung PP, Entsuah R. A randomized double blind placebo-controlled trial of desvenlafaxine succinate in adult outpatients with major depressive disorder. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2007; 68:11: 1663-1672.
3. Facts and Comparisons website. [Pristiq] Available at: <http://www.factsandcomparisons.com>. Accessed August 14, 2009.
4. Pristiq™ [package insert]. Philadelphia, PA: Wyeth Pharmaceuticals; August 2009.
5. Wyeth finally cleared for Pristiq lift-off, but with lower dose. Available at: <http://www.thepinksheet.com>. Accessed March 14, 2008.

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**Policy Link to Related Policies**


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