

## Medical Policy:

### Metoclopramide and Ondansetron Infusion for Hyperemesis Gravidarum

POLICY NUMBER	LAST REVIEW	ORIGIN DATE
MG.MM.PH.CC5	March 17, 2025	April 21, 2017

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The treating physician or primary care provider must submit to EmblemHealth, or ConnectiCare, as applicable (hereinafter jointly referred to as “EmblemHealth”), the clinical evidence that the member meets the criteria for the treatment or surgical procedure. Without this documentation and information, EmblemHealth will not be able to properly review the request preauthorization or post-payment review. The clinical review criteria expressed below reflects how EmblemHealth determines whether certain services or supplies are medically necessary. This clinical policy is not intended to pre-empt the judgment of the reviewing medical director or dictate to health care providers how to practice medicine. Health care providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in rendering appropriate care. Health care providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in rendering appropriate care.

EmblemHealth established the clinical review criteria based upon a review of currently available clinical information (including clinical outcome studies in the peer reviewed published medical literature, regulatory status of the technology, evidence-based guidelines of public health and health research agencies, evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations, views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas, and other relevant factors). EmblemHealth expressly reserves the right to revise these conclusions as clinical information changes and welcomes further relevant information. Each benefit program defines which services are covered. The conclusion that a particular service or supply is medically necessary does not constitute a representation or warranty that this service or supply is covered and/or paid for by EmblemHealth, as some programs exclude coverage for services or supplies that EmblemHealth considers medically necessary.

If there is a discrepancy between this guideline and a member's benefits program, the benefits program will govern. Identification of selected brand names of devices, tests and procedures in a medical coverage policy is for reference only and is not an endorsement of any one device, test or procedure over another. In addition, coverage may be mandated by applicable legal requirements of a state, the Federal Government or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for Medicare and Medicaid members. All coding and web site links are accurate at time of publication.

EmblemHealth may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the MCG™ Care Guidelines, to assist us in administering health benefits. The MCG™ Care Guidelines are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice. EmblemHealth Services Company, LLC, has adopted this policy in providing management, administrative and other services to EmblemHealth Plan, Inc., EmblemHealth Insurance Company, EmblemHealth Services Company, LLC, and Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP) related to health benefit plans offered by these entities. ConnectiCare, an EmblemHealth company, has also adopted this policy. All of the aforementioned entities are affiliated companies under common control of EmblemHealth Inc.

## Definitions

Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) — a severe form of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, generally described as unrelenting and excessive, which prevents adequate food and fluid intake. HG usually starts before 9 weeks of gestation and may resolve by 22 weeks with the most refractory cases lasting until delivery.

Severe and/or inadequately treated HG is typically associated with:

1. Loss of weight  $\geq$  5% of pre-pregnancy body weight (usually > 10%)
2. Dehydration (may be evidenced by diagnostic laboratory studies; e.g., urinalysis for ketones and specific gravity, serum electrolytes, liver enzymes and bilirubin, amylase/lipase, TSH, free thyroxine, urine culture, calcium level and hematocrit, etc.)
3. Nutritional deficiencies
4. Difficulty with daily activities

## Guideline

Members diagnosed with HG (documentation must support 1–4 above) may be eligible for coverage of home infusion with metoclopramide or ondansetron when a trial of medications, regardless of drug class, fails to relieve symptoms; either:

1. Any 2 oral medications (includes sublingual)
2. Any oral medication and at least 1 rectal medication

The following pharmacologic management guide for nausea, vomiting and dehydration is recommended.

**Note: drugs and classes listed not meant to be all-inclusive; dosing protocols not included, as accepted variances exist within the medical community.**

- 1st. Monotherapy — Pyridoxine (vitamin B6)
- 2nd. Add doxylamine (antihistamine)
- 3rd. Add Metoclopramide (prokinetic) orally. The following may also be added: Promethazine (antidopaminergic), orally or rectally; or, dimenhydrinate (antihistamine), orally or rectally
- 4th. Intravenous fluid replacement with thiamine followed by intravenous multivitamins with the addition of dimenhydrinate, metoclopramide or promethazine infusion
- 5th. Ondansetron 4–8mg orally or IV every 8 hours can be used (see Limitations/Exclusions cautionary information on dosing)
- 6th. Methylprednisolone (corticosteroid), orally or intravenously, for 3 days with tapering to lowest effective dose over 2 weeks or ondansetron infusion<sup>1</sup> (serotonin antagonist). Methylprednisolone should not be administered before 10 weeks of gestation

### Limitations/Exclusions

Ondansetron should not be given IV in doses greater than 16 mg to avoid the potential cardiac risk associated with prolonged QT interval. Antihistamines should be avoided in women taking ondansetron or other medications that prolong the Q-T interval.

Electrolyte and electrocardiogram monitoring are recommended for members being treated with ondansetron who have risk factors for arrhythmia, including family or personal history of prolonged QT interval, heart failure, hypokalemia, hypomagnesemia, and use of other medications that lead to prolongation of the QT interval.

### Applicable Procedure Codes

Code	Description
99601	Home infusion/specialty drug administration, per visit (up to 2 hours)
99602	Home infusion/specialty drug administration, per visit (up to 2 hours); each additional hour (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
J2405	Injection, ondansetron HCl, per 1 mg
J2765	Injection, metoclopramide HCl, up to 10 mg
S9351	Home infusion therapy, continuous or intermittent antiemetic infusion therapy; administrative services, professional pharmacy services, care coordination, and all necessary supplies and equipment (drugs and visits coded separately), per diem
S9379	Home infusion therapy, infusion therapy, not otherwise classified; administrative services, professional pharmacy services, care coordination, and all necessary supplies and equipment (drugs and nursing visits coded separately), per diem

### ICD-10 Diagnoses

Code	Description
O21.0	Mild hyperemesis gravidarum
O21.1	Hyperemesis gravidarum with metabolic disturbance

### Revision History

Company(ies)	DATE	REVISION
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	03/17/2025	Annual Review: no criteria changes
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	5/29/2024	Annual Review: no criteria changes
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	10/4/2023	Annual Review: no criteria changes
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	1/19/2023	Transfer to New Template
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	12/30/2020	No policy changes
EmblemHealth & ConnectiCare	4/21/2017	Moved Ondansetron from 6 <sup>th</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> in the treatment paradigm and added administration protocol and removed time-frame prerequisite prior to IV fluid replacement

## References

1. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. ACOG Practice Bulletin number 153. Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy. 2015.
2. HER Foundation. Understanding Hyperemesis. April 2016. <http://www.hyperemesis.org/hyperemesis-gravidarum/treatments/medications.php>. Accessed April 16, 2018.
3. Micromedex® Healthcare Series [Internet database]. Greenwood Village, Colo: Thomson Healthcare. Updated periodically. Specialty-matched clinical peer review.