

WEIGHT LOSS DRUGS AND CRITERIA 2009

As of September 1999, the following drugs are covered by Virginia Premier Health Plan, Inc. for weight loss with **PRIOR** authorization.

- Phentermine Hydrochloride (Fastin, Adipex-P, Ionamin)- sympathomimetics
- Diethylpropion Hydrochloride (Tenuate)- sympathomimetics
- Sibutramine (Meridia)- norepinephrine/serotonin/dopamine reuptake inhibitor
- Orlistat (Xenical)- lipase inhibitor
- Amphetamines-NOT COVERED for weight loss

The following criteria must be met and documentation of such must be sent to Virginia Premier when requesting prior-authorization for these drugs.

1. The member must have in the health record a documentation of 6-12 months of a prescribed diet and exercise program that has failed. The nature of the program, reason for failure and monthly weights must be recorded.
2. The member must have a BMI>30. A BMI> 27 with comorbidities will be considered.
3. A comprehensive history and physical exam must be recorded before the initiation of treatment. It should include an EKG and thyroid function testing. Patients with congestive heart failure, significant cardiovascular disease and uncontrolled hypertension will be excluded from treatment with sympathomimetics or sibutramine. Other contraindications also may exist and will be considered by the reviewer.
4. The use of any medication must be part of a documented comprehensive weight management program, to include a combination of diet modification, increased physical activity, and behavior therapy.
5. After beginning a drug, monthly blood pressure and weights must be recorded as well as any other tests necessary for monitoring potential adverse effects of drug therapy.
6. All patients on weight loss medication must be reassessed within 30 days of the initiation of their therapy. If they have not lost at least 4.4 pounds (2 kilograms) over their baseline weight, adjustment to dose, alternative medications, or cessation of medication should be strongly considered.
7. No more than a 30 day supply may be dispensed or prescribed at one time.
8. Only orlistat and sibutramine will be considered for continued prescribing beyond 90 consecutive days.