

Phentermine/Topiramate (QSYMIA)

Criteria for Use

October 2023

VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services, Medical Advisory Panel, and VISN Pharmacist Executives

The following recommendations are based on medical evidence, clinician input, and expert opinion. The content of the document is dynamic and will be revised as new information becomes available. The purpose of this document is to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making, to standardize and improve the quality of patient care, and to promote cost-effective drug prescribing. THE CLINICIAN SHOULD USE THIS GUIDANCE AND INTERPRET IT IN THE CLINICAL CONTEXT OF THE INDIVIDUAL PATIENT. INDIVIDUAL CASES THAT ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THE EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION CRITERIA SHOULD BE ADJUDICATED AT THE LOCAL FACILITY ACCORDING TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF ITS P&T COMMITTEE AND PHARMACY SERVICES.

The Product Information should be consulted for detailed prescribing information.

Exclusion Criteria

If the answer to ANY item below is met, then the patient should NOT receive phentermine/topiramate.

- Pregnancy ^1
- Lactating ^2
- Glaucoma
- Hyperthyroidism
- Patient has history of suicidal attempts or active suicidal ideation (unless mental health consultation supports benefit of phentermine/topiramate in patient with history of suicide attempts or recent suicidal ideation) ^3
 1. Teratogenic risk; available only through Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) program
 2. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions, lactating/breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment with phentermine/topiramate per the manufacturer prescribing information
 3. Per clinical trial exclusion criteria (history of recurrent major depression, presence or history of suicidal behavior or ideation with intent to act or current substantial depressive symptoms [e.g., PHQ-9 at least 10]) and warning/precautions in product information

Inclusion Criteria

The answers to ALL of the following must be fulfilled in order to meet criteria.

- Verifiable participation in a comprehensive lifestyle intervention that targets all three aspects of weight management: diet, physical activity, behavioral changes ^4
- BMI is greater than or equal to 30 kg/m² **OR** BMI is greater than or equal to 27 kg/m² with at least one weight-related comorbidity ^5^6
- If taking topiramate for another condition (e.g., seizure disorder, migraines), the dose of topiramate is adjusted, as indicated, so the cumulative dose does not exceed 400 mg/day ^7
- 4. Participation in a CLI is an essential component to overall weight management. Use of weight management medications should be prescribed in conjunction with CLI.
- 5. Examples of weight-related comorbidities: hypertension, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, metabolic syndrome, obstructive sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease
- 6. If clinically appropriate, consider discontinuing medications that may precipitate weight gain. Refer to Sidebar 2. Select Medications and their Potential Effects on Weight in the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Adult Overweight and Obesity at: <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/CD/obesity/VADoDObesityCPGFinal5087242020.pdf>
- 7. Consider consultation with a neurologist

Additional Inclusion Criteria (Select if applicable)

- For patients who can become pregnant: Pregnancy has been excluded prior to receiving phentermine/topiramate. Note: Monthly pregnancy tests are recommended.
- For patients who can become pregnant: Counseling provided on potential risks vs. benefits of treatment and the use of effective contraception during therapy.

Supplemental Information

Refer to PBM-MAP-VPE Clinical Guidance: Weight Management Medications for Chronic Use Guidance for Treatment Selection at: [PBM Formulary Management - Clinical Recommendations - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

4/2013; Revised 7/2016, 9/2017, 3/2020, 10/2021, 4/2022, 6/2023, 10/2023

Contact person: Elaine Furmaga, PharmD, National PBM Clinical Pharmacy Program Manager, Formulary Management, VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services (12PBM)
