

## **Clinical Policy: Adapalene/Benzoyl Peroxide (Epiduo Forte)**

Reference Number: CP.CPA.337

Effective Date: 12.01.18

Last Review Date: 11.25

Line of Business: Commercial

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

### **Description**

Adapalene 0.3%/benzoyl peroxide 2.5% (Epiduo<sup>®</sup> Forte) is a topical combination product of two active ingredients: adapalene, a retinoid, and benzoyl peroxide, an oxidizing agent with bactericidal and keratolytic effects.

### **FDA Approved Indication(s)**

Epiduo Forte is indicated for the topical treatment of acne vulgaris in adults and pediatric patients 12 years of age and older.

### **Policy/Criteria**

*Provider must submit documentation (such as office chart notes, lab results or other clinical information) supporting that member has met all approval criteria.*

It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation<sup>®</sup> that adapalene 0.3%/benzoyl peroxide 2.5% and Epiduo Forte are **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

#### **I. Initial Approval Criteria**

##### **A. Acne Vulgaris** (must meet all):

1. Diagnosis of acne vulgaris;
2. Age  $\geq$  12 years;
3. Failure of TWO preferred topical anti-acne agents (e.g., topical adapalene, benzoyl peroxide 2.5%/adapalene 0.1%, tretinoin, benzoyl peroxide/erythromycin, clindamycin, benzoyl peroxide/clindamycin phosphate, erythromycin, sulfacetamide/sulfur, *see Appendix B for examples*), unless clinically significant adverse effects are experienced or all are contraindicated;
4. Dose does not exceed 45 g container per month.

**Approval duration: 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less**

##### **B. Other diagnoses/indications** (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
  - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or

- b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial.

## II. Continued Therapy

### A. Acne Vulgaris (must meet all):

1. Member meets one of the following (a or b):
  - a. Currently receiving medication via Centene benefit or member has previously met initial approval criteria;
  - b. Member is currently receiving medication and is enrolled in a state and product with continuity of care regulations (*refer to state specific addendums for CC.PHARM.03A and CC.PHARM.03B*);
2. Member is responding positively to therapy;
3. If request is for a dose increase, dose does not exceed 45 g per month.

**Approval duration: 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less**

### B. Other diagnoses/indications (must meet 1 or 2):

1. If this drug has recently (within the last 6 months) undergone a label change (e.g., newly approved indication, age expansion, new dosing regimen) that is not yet reflected in this policy, refer to one of the following policies (a or b):
  - a. For drugs on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or
  - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial; or
2. If the requested use (e.g., diagnosis, age, dosing regimen) is NOT specifically listed under section III (Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized) AND criterion 1 above does not apply, refer to the off-label use policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.09 for commercial.

## III. Diagnoses/Indications for which coverage is NOT authorized:

- A. Non-FDA approved indications, which are not addressed in this policy, unless there is sufficient documentation of efficacy and safety according to the off label use policies – CP.CPA.09 for commercial or evidence of coverage documents.

## IV. Appendices/General Information

*Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key*

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

*Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives*

*This table provides a listing of preferred alternative therapy recommended in the approval criteria. The drugs listed here may not be a formulary agent for all relevant lines of business and may require prior authorization.*

Drug Name	Dosing Regimen	Dose Limit/ Maximum Dose
<b>Topical Retinoids</b>		
adapalene (Differin <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin film QD	Not applicable
tretinoin (Retin-A <sup>®</sup> , Retin-A Micro <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin film QD	Not applicable
<b>Topical Anti-infectives</b>		
benzoyl peroxide (Benzac <sup>®</sup> , BPO <sup>®</sup> , PanOxyl <sup>®</sup> )*	Apply or wash QD to TID	Not applicable
sulfacetamide/sulfur	Apply or wash QD to TID	Not applicable
<b>Topical Antibiotics</b>		
Clindamycin (Cleocin T <sup>®</sup> , Clindagel <sup>®</sup> , Clindacin <sup>®</sup> )	Apply a thin film BID	Not applicable
erythromycin (Erygel <sup>®</sup> , Ery)	Apply a thin film BID	Not applicable
<b>Combination products</b>		
Example combination products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clindamycin/benzoyl peroxide</li> <li>• erythromycin/benzoyl peroxide</li> <li>• adapalene/benzoyl peroxide</li> <li>• clindamycin/tretinoin</li> </ul>	Varies	Not applicable

*Therapeutic alternatives are listed as Brand name<sup>®</sup> (generic) when the drug is available by brand name only and generic (Brand name<sup>®</sup>) when the drug is available by both brand and generic.*

*\*Available over-the-counter (OTC) in a number of preparations.*

*Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings*

None reported

**V. Dosage and Administration**

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
Acne vulgaris	Apply a pea-sized amount to each affected area of the face and/or trunk topically QD after washing	Not applicable

**VI. Product Availability**

Gel pump (15 g, 30 g, 45 g, 60 g, 70 g): adapalene 0.3%/benzoyl peroxide 2.5%

**VII. References**

1. Epiduo Forte Prescribing Information. Fort Worth, TX: Galderma Laboratories; April 2022. Available at: [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/label/2022/207917Orig1s004s0081bl.pdf](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2022/207917Orig1s004s0081bl.pdf). Accessed August 7, 2025.
2. Clinical Pharmacology [database online]. Tampa, FL: Elsevier, Inc.; 2025. Available at: <https://www.clinicalkey.com/pharmacology/>. Accessed August 7, 2025.

3. Zaenglein AL, Pathy AL, Schlosser BJ et al. Guidelines of care for the management of acne vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2016 May;74(5):945-73.e33. doi:10.1016/j.jaad.2015.12.037.
4. Reynolds RV, Yeung H, Cheng CE, et al. Guidelines of care for the management of acne vulgaris. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2024 May;90(5):1006.e1-1006.e30. doi: 10.1016/j.jaad.2023.12.017.

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
4Q 2021 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	08.09.21	11.21
Revised approval duration for Commercial line of business from length of benefit to 12 months or duration of request, whichever is less.	04.26.22	08.22
4Q 2022 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. Template changes applied to other diagnoses/indications and continued therapy section.	08.15.22	11.22
4Q 2023 annual review: no significant changes; removed commercially unavailable branded therapeutic alternatives; references reviewed and updated.	08.02.23	11.23
4Q 2024 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	08.01.24	11.24
4Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	08.07.25	11.25

**Important Reminder**

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions, and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment, or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

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