

Clinical Policy: Nabumetone Double-Strength (Relafen DS)

Reference Number: CP.PMN.287

Effective Date: 06.01.23

Last Review Date: 05.26

Line of Business: Commercial, HIM/ICHRA, Medicaid

[Revision Log](#)

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

Description

Double-strength nabumetone (Relafen[®] DS) is nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).

FDA Approved Indication(s)

Relafen DS is indicated for relief of signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

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[®] that Relafen DS is **medically necessary** when the following criteria are met:

I. Initial Approval Criteria**A. Osteoarthritis or Rheumatoid Arthritis (must meet all):**

1. Diagnosis of OA or RA;
2. Age $\geq$ 18 years;
3. Member must use generic nabumetone 500 mg or 750 mg tablet, unless contraindicated or clinically significant adverse effects are experienced;*
** For Illinois HIM requests, the step therapy requirements above do not apply as of 1/1/2026 per IL HB 5395*
4. Documentation supports inability to use multiple generic nabumetone 500 mg tablets to achieve the requested Relafen DS dose;*
** For Illinois HIM requests, the step therapy requirements above do not apply as of 1/1/2026 per IL HB 5395*
5. Dose does not exceed both of the following (a and b):
 - a. 2,000 mg per day;
 - b. 2 tablets per day.

Approval duration: 12 months

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/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of

- business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
- b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; 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, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

II. Continued Therapy

A. Osteoarthritis or Rheumatoid (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, new dose does not exceed both of the following (a and b):
 - a. 2,000 mg per day;
 - b. 2 tablets per day.

Approval duration: 12 months

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/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the no coverage criteria policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.33 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.255 for Medicaid; or
 - b. For drugs NOT on the formulary (commercial, health insurance marketplace/ICHRA) or PDL (Medicaid), the non-formulary policy for the relevant line of business: CP.CPA.190 for commercial, HIM.PA.103 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.16 for Medicaid; 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, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid.

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

- 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, HIM.PA.154 for health insurance marketplace/ICHRA, and CP.PMN.53 for Medicaid or evidence of coverage documents.

IV. Appendices/General Information

Appendix A: Abbreviation/Acronym Key

CABG: coronary artery bypass graft

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

OA: osteoarthritis

NSAID: nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug

RA: rheumatoid arthritis

Appendix B: Therapeutic Alternatives

Not applicable

Appendix C: Contraindications/Boxed Warnings

- Contraindication(s): hypersensitivity to nabumetone or product excipients; history of asthma, urticaria, or allergic-type reactions after taking aspirin or other NSAIDs; in the setting of coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery;
- Boxed warning(s): increased risk of serious cardiovascular thrombotic events, including myocardial infarction and stroke; increased risk of serious gastrointestinal adverse events including bleeding, ulceration, and perforation of the stomach or intestines; in the setting of CABG surgery

V. Dosage and Administration

Indication	Dosing Regimen	Maximum Dose
OA/RA	1,000 mg PO daily	2,000 mg/day

VI. Product Availability

Tablet: 1,000 mg

VII. References

1. Relafen DS Prescribing Information. Hazlet, NJ: Carwin Pharmaceutical Associates, LLC. January 2024. Available at <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/getFile.cfm?setid=a9a0af85-6c43-4a2d-ba75-0be4ca64c931&type=pdf/>. Accessed January 23, 2026.
2. Relafen Drug Monograph. Clinical Pharmacology. Available at www.clinicalkey.com/pharmacology. Accessed January 16, 2025.

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
Policy created per February SDC.	02.21.23	05.23
2Q 2024 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	01.19.24	05.24

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	P&T Approval Date
2Q 2025 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated.	01.16.25	05.25
Added step therapy bypass for IL HIM per IL HB 5395.	06.27.25	
2Q 2026 annual review: no significant changes; references reviewed and updated. Added ICHRA line of business.	03.30.26	05.26

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.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

This clinical policy is the property of the Health Plan. Unauthorized copying, use, and distribution of this clinical policy or any information contained herein are strictly prohibited. Providers, members, and their representatives are bound to the terms and conditions expressed herein through the terms of their contracts. Where no such contract exists, providers, members and their representatives agree to be bound by such terms and conditions by providing services to members and/or submitting claims for payment for such services.

Note:

For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

©2023 Centene Corporation. All rights reserved. All materials are exclusively owned by Centene Corporation and are protected by United States copyright law and international copyright law. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, modified, distributed, displayed, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, or otherwise published without the prior written permission of Centene Corporation. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice contained herein. Centene[®] and Centene Corporation[®] are registered trademarks exclusively owned by Centene Corporation.