

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION POLICY

POLICY: Inflammatory Conditions – Tremfya Subcutaneous Prior Authorization Policy

- Tremfya® (guselkumab subcutaneous injection – Janssen Biotech/Johnson & Johnson)

REVIEW DATE: 09/24/2025; selected revision 10/01/2025

OVERVIEW

Tremfya, an interleukin (IL)-23 blocker, is indicated for the following uses:¹

- **Crohn's disease**, in adults with moderate to severe active disease.
- **Plaque psoriasis**, in adults with moderate to severe disease who are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy.
- **Plaque psoriasis**, in pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age and weighing ≥ 40 kg with moderate to severe disease who are candidates for phototherapy or systemic therapy
- **Psoriatic arthritis**, in adults with active disease (given \pm a conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drug).
- **Psoriatic arthritis**, in pediatric patients ≥ 6 years of age and weighing ≥ 40 kg with active disease (given \pm a conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drug).
- **Ulcerative colitis**, in adults with moderate to severe active disease.

Guidelines

IL blockers are mentioned in guidelines for treatment of inflammatory conditions.

- **Crohn's Disease:** The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) [2025] has guidelines for the management of Crohn's disease in adults.⁷ In moderate to severe disease, systemic corticosteroids or advanced therapies may be utilized for induction of remission. Advanced therapies recommended include tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors, Entyvio® (vedolizumab), IL-23 inhibitors, IL-12/23 inhibitors, and Rinvoq® (upadacitinib extended-release tablets). If steroids are utilized for induction, efforts should be made to introduce steroid-sparing agents for maintenance therapy. Guidelines from the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) [2021] include biologics among the therapies for moderate to severe Crohn's disease, for induction and maintenance of remission.⁸
- **Plaque Psoriasis:** Joint guidelines from the American Academy of Dermatology and National Psoriasis Medical Board (2019) have been published for management of psoriasis with biologics.² These guidelines list Tremfya as a monotherapy treatment option for patients with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis. It is recommended that a response to therapy be ascertained after 12 weeks of continuous therapy. Guidelines from the European Dermatology Forum (2025) recommend biologics as second-line therapy for induction and long-term treatment if phototherapy and conventional systemic agents have failed, are contraindicated, or are not tolerated.³ Pediatric guidelines were published by the American Academy of Dermatology and the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) [2020].⁹ These guidelines list traditional systemic therapies (e.g., methotrexate, cyclosporine, acitretin) and biologics as options for treatment of moderate to severe plaque psoriasis.
- **Psoriatic Arthritis:** Guidelines from the American College of Rheumatology/National Psoriasis Foundation (2018) were published prior to approval of Tremfya for psoriatic arthritis. However, these guidelines generally recommend TNF inhibitors as the first-line treatment strategy over other biologics (e.g., IL-17 blockers, IL-12/23 inhibitor) with differing mechanisms of action.⁴

- **Ulcerative colitis:** The AGA (2024) and ACG (2025) have clinical practice guidelines on the management of moderate to severe ulcerative colitis in adults.^{5,6} In moderate to severe disease, systemic corticosteroids or advanced therapies may be utilized for induction of remission. Recommended advanced therapies include TNF inhibitors, Entyvio, IL-23 inhibitors, IL-12/23 inhibitors, sphingosine-1-phosphate (S1P) receptor modulators, and Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitors. If steroids are utilized for induction, efforts should be made to introduce steroid-sparing agents for maintenance therapy. Of note, guidelines state that corticosteroids may be avoided entirely when other effective induction strategies are planned.⁶ Both guidelines also recommend that any drug that effectively treats induction should be continued for maintenance.^{5,6}

POLICY STATEMENT

Prior Authorization is recommended for prescription benefit coverage of Tremfya. All approvals are for the duration noted below. In cases where the approval is authorized in months, 1 month is equal to 30 days. Because of the specialized skills required for evaluation and diagnosis of patients treated with Tremfya as well as the monitoring required for adverse events and long-term efficacy, initial approval requires Tremfya to be prescribed by or in consultation with a physician who specializes in the condition being treated.

Automation: None.

RECOMMENDED AUTHORIZATION CRITERIA

Coverage of Tremfya is recommended in those who meet one of the following criteria:

FDA-Approved Indications

1. **Crohn's Disease.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):
 - A) **Initial Therapy.** Approve for 6 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):
 - i. Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
 - ii. Patient meets ONE of the following (a, b, c, or d):
 - a) Patient has tried or is currently taking corticosteroids, or corticosteroids are contraindicated in this patient; OR
Note: Examples of corticosteroids are prednisone or methylprednisolone.
 - b) Patient has tried one other conventional systemic therapy for Crohn's disease; OR
Note: Examples of conventional systemic therapy for Crohn's disease include azathioprine, 6-mercaptopurine, or methotrexate. An exception to the requirement for a trial of or contraindication to steroids or a trial of one other conventional systemic agent can be made if the patient has already tried at least one biologic other than the requested medication. A biosimilar of the requested biologic does not count. Refer to [Appendix](#) for examples of biologics used for Crohn's disease. A trial of mesalamine does not count as a systemic agent for Crohn's disease.
 - c) Patient has enterocutaneous (perianal or abdominal) or rectovaginal fistulas; OR
 - d) Patient had ileocolonic resection (to reduce the chance of Crohn's disease recurrence); AND
 - iii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist; OR
 - B) **Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya.** Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
 - i. Patient has been established on therapy for at least 6 months; AND

Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).

- ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug); OR
Note: Examples of objective measures include fecal markers (e.g., fecal lactoferrin, fecal calprotectin), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein), imaging studies (magnetic resonance enterography, computed tomography enterography), endoscopic assessment, and/or reduced dose of corticosteroids.
 - b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, fatigue, stool frequency, and/or blood in stool.

2. Plaque Psoriasis. Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 3 months if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):

- i. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) Patients meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:
 - (1) Patient is ≥ 6 years to ≤ 17 years of age; AND
 - (2) Patient weighs ≥ 40 kg; OR
 - b) Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
- ii. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) Patient has tried at least at least one traditional systemic agent for psoriasis for at least 3 months, unless intolerant; OR
Note: Examples include methotrexate, cyclosporine, or acitretin. A 3-month trial of psoralen plus ultraviolet A light (PUVA) also counts. An exception to the requirement for a trial of one traditional systemic agent for psoriasis can be made if the patient has already had a 3-month trial or previous intolerance to at least one biologic other than the requested drug. A biosimilar of the requested biologic does not count. Refer to [Appendix](#) for examples of biologics used for psoriasis. A patient who has already tried a biologic for psoriasis is not required to “step back” and try a traditional systemic agent for psoriasis.
 - b) Patient has a contraindication to methotrexate, as determined by the prescriber; AND
- iii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a dermatologist; OR

B) Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets ALL of the following (i, ii, and iii):

- i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 3 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 3 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).
- ii. Patient experienced a beneficial clinical response, defined as improvement from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug) in at least one of the following: estimated body surface area, erythema, induration/thickness, and/or scale of areas affected by psoriasis; AND
- iii. Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, itching, and/or burning.

3. Psoriatic Arthritis. Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):

A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 6 months if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):

- i. Patient meets ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) Patients meets BOTH of the following [(1) and (2)]:
 - (1) Patient is ≥ 6 years to ≤ 17 years of age; AND
 - (2) Patient weighs ≥ 40 kg; OR

- b) Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
 - ii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a rheumatologist or a dermatologist; OR
 - B) Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
 - i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).
 - ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug); OR
Note: Examples of objective measures of disease activity include Disease Activity Index for Psoriatic Arthritis (DAPSA), Composite Psoriatic Disease Activity Index (CPDAI), Psoriatic Arthritis Disease Activity Score (PsA DAS), Grace Index, Leeds Enthesitis Score (LEI), Spondyloarthritis Consortium of Canada (SPARCC) enthesitis score, Leeds Dactylitis Instrument Score, Minimal Disease Activity (MDA), Psoriatic Arthritis Impact of Disease (PsAID-12), and/or serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein, erythrocyte sedimentation rate).
 - b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as less joint pain, morning stiffness, or fatigue; improved function or activities of daily living; decreased soft tissue swelling in joints or tendon sheaths.
- 4. **Ulcerative Colitis.** Approve for the duration noted if the patient meets ONE of the following (A or B):
 - A) Initial Therapy. Approve for 6 months if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
 - i. Patient is ≥ 18 years of age; AND
 - ii. The medication is prescribed by or in consultation with a gastroenterologist; OR
 - B) Patient is Currently Receiving Tremfya. Approve for 1 year if the patient meets BOTH of the following (i and ii):
 - i. Patient has been established on the requested drug for at least 6 months; AND
Note: A patient who has received < 6 months of therapy or who is restarting therapy with the requested drug is reviewed under criterion A (Initial Therapy).
 - ii. Patient meets at least ONE of the following (a or b):
 - a) When assessed by at least one objective measure, patient experienced a beneficial clinical response from baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug); OR
Note: Examples of assessment for inflammatory response include fecal markers (e.g., fecal calprotectin), serum markers (e.g., C-reactive protein), endoscopic assessment, and/or reduced dose of corticosteroids.
 - b) Compared with baseline (prior to initiating the requested drug), patient experienced an improvement in at least one symptom, such as decreased pain, fatigue, stool frequency, and/or decreased rectal bleeding.

CONDITIONS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

Coverage of Tremfya is not recommended in the following situations:

1. **Concurrent Use with a Biologic or with a Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drug.** This medication should not be administered in combination with another biologic or with a targeted synthetic oral small molecule drug used for an inflammatory condition (see [Appendix](#) for examples).

Combination therapy is generally not recommended due to a potentially higher rate of adverse events and lack of controlled clinical data supporting additive efficacy.

Note: This does NOT exclude the use of conventional synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (e.g., methotrexate, leflunomide, hydroxychloroquine, or sulfasalazine) in combination with this medication.

2. Coverage is not recommended for circumstances not listed in the Recommended Authorization Criteria. Criteria will be updated as new published data are available.

REFERENCES

1. Tremfya® subcutaneous injection [prescribing information]. Horsham, PA: Janssen Biotech/Johnson & Johnson September 2025.
2. Menter A, Strober BE, Kaplan DH, et al. Joint AAD-NPF guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis with biologics. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2019;80(4):1029-1072.
3. Nast A, Smith C, Spuls PI, et al. EuroGuiDerm Guideline on the systemic treatment of Psoriasis vulgaris - Part 1: treatment and monitoring recommendations. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol*. 2020 Nov;34(11):2461-2498.
4. Singh JA, Guyatt G, Ogdie A, et al. 2018 American College of Rheumatology/National Psoriasis Foundation guideline for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis. *Arthritis Rheumatol*. 2019;71(1):5-32.
5. Singh S, Loftus EV Jr, Limketkai BN, et al. AGA Living Clinical Practice Guideline on Pharmacological Management of Moderate-to-Severe Ulcerative Colitis. *Gastroenterology*. 2024 Dec;167(7):1307-1343.
6. Rubin D, Ananthakrishnan A, Siegel C. ACG Clinical Guideline Update: Ulcerative Colitis in Adults. *Am J of Gastroenterol*. 2025 June;120(6):1187-1224
7. Lichtenstein, G, Loftus E, Afzali A, et al. ACG Clinical Guideline: Management of Crohn's Disease in Adults. *Am J Gastroenterol*. 2025 June;120(6):1225-1264.
8. Feuerstein JD, Ho EY, Shmidt E, et al. AGA clinical practice guidelines on the medical management of moderate to severe luminal and perianal fistulizing Crohn's disease. *Gastroenterology*. 2021;160(7):2496-2508.
9. Menter A, Cordero KM, Davis DMR, et al. Joint American Academy of Dermatology-National Psoriasis Foundation guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis in pediatric patients. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2020 Jan;82(1):161-201.

HISTORY

Type of Revision	Summary of Changes	Review Date
Annual Revision	No criteria changes.	08/23/2022
Selected Revision	Plaque Psoriasis: For a patient currently taking Tremfya, the timeframe for established on therapy was changed from 90 days to 3 months.	03/27/2024
Selected Revision	Plaque Psoriasis: In the Note, psoralen plus ultraviolet A light (PUVA) was removed from the examples of traditional systemic therapies. An additional Note was added that a 3-month trial of PUVA counts as a traditional systemic therapy. Psoriatic Arthritis: For initial approvals, a requirement that the patient is ≥ 18 years of age was added. Conditions Not Recommended for Approval: Concurrent use with a Biologic or with a Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drug was changed to as listed (previously oral small molecule drug was listed as Disease-Modifying Antirheumatic Drug).	09/11/2024
Annual Revision	Policy name was changed to as listed (previously was Inflammatory Conditions – Tremfya). Ulcerative Colitis: This new condition of approval was added to the policy.	10/02/2024
Selected Revision	Crohn's Disease: This new condition of approval was added to the policy.	04/02/2025
Selected Revision	Ulcerative Colitis: For initial therapy, removed the following options of approval: (1) the patient has tried one systemic therapy; (2) the patient has pouchitis and tried an antibiotic, probiotic, corticosteroid enema, or mesalamine enema.	07/23/2025
Annual Revision	Ulcerative Colitis: For initial therapy, removed the requirement the patient will receive three induction doses of Tremfya intravenous within three months of initiating therapy with Tremfya subcutaneous.	09/24/2025
Selected Revision	Plaque Psoriasis: An option of approval in a patient ≥ 6 years to ≤ 17 years of age and weighing ≥ 40 kg was added. Psoriatic Arthritis: An option of approval in a patient ≥ 6 years to ≤ 17 years of age and weighing ≥ 40 kg was added.	10/01/2025

APPENDIX

	Mechanism of Action	Examples of Indications*
Biologics		
Adalimumab SC Products (Humira®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Cimzia® (certolizumab pegol SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA, RA
Etanercept SC Products (Enbrel®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, JIA, PsO, PsA, RA
Infliximab IV Products (Remicade®, biosimilars)	Inhibition of TNF	AS, CD, PsO, PsA, RA, UC
Zymfentra® (infliximab-dyyb SC injection)	Inhibition of TNF	CD, UC
Simponi®, Simponi Aria® (golimumab SC injection, golimumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of TNF	SC formulation: AS, PsA, RA, UC
		IV formulation: AS, PJIA, PsA, RA
Tocilizumab Products (Actemra® IV, biosimilar; Actemra SC, biosimilar)	Inhibition of IL-6	SC formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
		IV formulation: PJIA, RA, SJIA
Kevzara® (sarilumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-6	RA
Orencia® (abatacept IV infusion, abatacept SC injection)	T-cell costimulation modulator	SC formulation: JIA, PSA, RA
		IV formulation: JIA, PsA, RA
Rituximab IV Products (Rituxan®, biosimilars)	CD20-directed cytolytic antibody	RA
Kineret® (anakinra SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-1	JIA [^] , RA
Omvo® (mirikizumab IV infusion, SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	CD, UC
Ustekinumab Products (Stelara® IV, biosimilars, Stelara SC, biosimilars)	Inhibition of IL-12/23	SC formulation: CD, PsO, PsA, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Siliq® (brodalumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17	PsO
Cosentyx® (secukinumab SC injection; secukinumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-17A	SC formulation: AS, ERA, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
		IV formulation: AS, nr-axSpA, PsA
Taltz® (ixekizumab SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A	AS, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
Bimzelx® (bimekizumab-bkzx SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-17A/17F	AS, nr-axSpA, PsO, PsA
Ilumya® (tildrakizumab-asmn SC injection)	Inhibition of IL-23	PsO
Skyrizi® (risankizumab-rzaa SC injection, risankizumab-rzaa IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: CD, PSA, PsO, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Tremfya® (guselkumab SC injection, guselkumab IV infusion)	Inhibition of IL-23	SC formulation: CD, PsA, PsO, UC
		IV formulation: CD, UC
Entyvio® (vedolizumab IV infusion, vedolizumab SC injection)	Integrin receptor antagonist	CD, UC
Oral Therapies/Targeted Synthetic Oral Small Molecule Drugs		
Otezla® (apremilast tablets)	Inhibition of PDE4	PsO, PsA
Cibinqo™ (abrocitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD
Olumiant® (baricitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, AA
Litfulo® (ritlecitinib capsules)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Leqselvi® (deuruxolitinib tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AA
Rinvoq® (upadacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	AD, AS, nr-axSpA, RA, PsA, CD, UC
		PsA, PJIA
Rinvoq® LQ (upadacitinib oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	PsA, PJIA
Sotyktu® (deucravacitinib tablets)	Inhibition of TYK2	PsO
Xeljanz® (tofacitinib tablets/oral solution)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PJIA, PsA, UC
Xeljanz® XR (tofacitinib extended-release tablets)	Inhibition of JAK pathways	RA, PsA, UC
Zeposia® (ozanimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC
		UC
Velsipity® (etrasimod tablets)	Sphingosine 1 phosphate receptor modulator	UC

* Not an all-inclusive list of indications. Refer to the prescribing information for the respective agent for FDA-approved indications; SC – Subcutaneous; TNF – Tumor necrosis factor; AS – Ankylosing spondylitis; CD – Crohn’s disease; JIA – Juvenile idiopathic arthritis; PsO – Plaque psoriasis; PsA – Psoriatic arthritis; RA – Rheumatoid arthritis; UC – Ulcerative colitis; nr-axSpA – Non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis; IV – Intravenous, PJIA – Polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis; IL – Interleukin; SJIA – Systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis; [^] Off-label use of Kineret in JIA supported in guidelines; ERA – Enthesitis-related arthritis; DMARD – Disease-modifying antirheumatic drug; PDE4 – Phosphodiesterase 4; JAK – Janus kinase; AD – Atopic dermatitis; AA – Alopecia areata; TYK2 – Tyrosine kinase 2.