

Case Number:	CM15-0125544		
Date Assigned:	07/10/2015	Date of Injury:	10/21/2011
Decision Date:	08/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/29/2015

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:
 State(s) of Licensure: Arizona, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The injured worker is a 50 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 10/21/2011. Mechanism of injury occurred when he was pushing a garbage bin into an enclosure and was hit by the metal door. Diagnoses include post-surgical cervical laminectomy syndrome, cervical degenerative disc disease, cervicgia, disorder tobacco use, spinal facet joint effusion, spinal enthesopathy, cervicobrachial syndrome-diffuse, cervical radiculopathy/radiculitis, cervical facet syndrome, reversal of the cervical curve, MSK system, and abnormal posture with moderate protraction of the neck, abnormal reflex-mild hyper-reflexia. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, medications, status post cervical fusion on 03/14/2013, and transforaminal cervical epidural steroid injections. His current medications include Norco, Relafen, Omeprazole, Ibuprofen, Orphenadrine and Nortriptyline. A physician progress note dated 06/09/2015 documents the injured worker complains of neck pain. He rates his pain as 8 out of 10 on the pain scale. He takes Relafen intermittently with moderate pain relief and he has less inflammation and reduced swelling. He describes his pain as aching, heavy, tender and throbbing. His pain with medications is rated 6 out of 10. He also has difficulty swallowing, loss of range of motion, numbness, tingling, and weakness in the bilateral upper limbs. He also has trouble grasping. Cervical spine range of motion is restricted and there is moderate tight band spasm, tenderness and hypertonicity along the bilateral cervical paraspinal muscles. Spurling's maneuver, provocative loading maneuver are moderately positively and Hoffman's sign is positive. The treatment plan includes the medications Motrin, Norco Nortriptyline, Prilosec and Orphenadrine. Treatment requested is for Relafen 750 mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Relafen 750 mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDS.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDS
Page(s): 67.

Decision rationale: According to the guidelines, NSAIDs are recommended as a second-line treatment after acetaminophen. Acetaminophen may be considered for initial therapy for patients with mild to moderate pain. NSAIDs are recommended as an option for short-term symptomatic relief. In this case, the claimant had been on Relafen for over 2 years in combination with Norco. There was no indication of Tylenol failure. Long-term NSAID use has renal and GI risks and the claimant required a proton pump inhibitor. Pain scores had a 50% drop with medications initially and currently a 20% drop indicating decreased affectivity and increasing pain. Continued use of Relafen is not medically necessary.