



MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy Interferential Current Stimulation

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Policy Number: 509

BCBSA Reference Number: 1.01.24 (For Plan internal use only)

NCD/LCD: NA

Related Policies

- Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation #003
- Biofeedback as a Treatment of Fecal Incontinence or Constipation #308
- Percutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation and Percutaneous Neuromodulation Therapy #172

Policy

Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Interferential current stimulation is considered [INVESTIGATIONAL](#).

Prior Authorization Information

Inpatient

- For services described in this policy, precertification/preauthorization **IS REQUIRED** for all products if the procedure is performed **inpatient**.

Outpatient

- For services described in this policy, see below for products where prior authorization **might be required** if the procedure is performed **outpatient**.

	Outpatient
Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)	This is not a covered service.
Commercial PPO and Indemnity	This is not a covered service.
Medicare HMO Blue SM	This is not a covered service.
Medicare PPO Blue SM	This is not a covered service.

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD Codes

Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member's contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.

The following codes are included below for informational purposes only; this is not an all-inclusive list.

The following HCPCS codes are considered investigational for Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, Indemnity, Medicare HMO Blue and Medicare PPO Blue:

HCPCS codes:	Code Description
S8130	Interferential current stimulator, 2 channel
S8131	Interferential current stimulator, 4 channel

Description

Interferential current stimulation (IFS) is a type of electrical stimulation that has been investigated as a technique to reduce pain, improve function and range of motion, and treat gastrointestinal disorders.

This stimulation uses paired electrodes of 2 independent circuits carrying high-frequency and medium-frequency alternating currents. The superficial electrodes are aligned on the skin around the affected area. It is believed that IFS permeates tissues more effectively, with less unwanted stimulation of cutaneous nerves, and is more comfortable than transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation. There are no standardized protocols for the use of IFS; IFS may vary by the frequency of stimulation, the pulse duration, treatment time, and electrode-placement technique.

Summary

Description

Interferential current stimulation (IFS) is a type of electrical stimulation used to reduce pain. The technique has been proposed to decrease pain and increase function in individuals with osteoarthritis and to treat other conditions such as constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, dyspepsia, and spasticity.

Summary of Evidence

For individuals who have musculoskeletal conditions who receive IFS, the evidence includes randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and meta-analyses. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, quality of life, medication use, and treatment-related morbidity. Placebo-controlled randomized trial(s) have found that IFS when used to treat musculoskeletal pain and impaired function(s), does not significantly improve outcomes. Meta-analyses for IFS in musculoskeletal conditions have generally found IFS to be no more effective than other therapies. One network meta-analysis did find improvement with IFS compared with control, but the analysis is limited by indirect comparisons. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have gastrointestinal disorders who receive IFS, the evidence includes RCTs. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, quality of life, medication use, and treatment-related morbidity. Interferential current stimulation has been tested for a variety of gastrointestinal conditions, with a small number of trials completed for each condition. The results of the trials are mixed, with some reporting benefit and others not. This body of evidence is inconclusive on whether IFS is an efficacious treatment for gastrointestinal conditions. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have poststroke spasticity who receive IFS, the evidence includes RCTs. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, quality of life, and treatment-related morbidity. The RCTs had small sample sizes and very short follow-up (immediately posttreatment to 5 weeks). The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

Policy History

Date	Action
8/2023	Annual policy review. References updated. Policy statements unchanged.
8/2022	Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.
8/2020	Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.
8/2019	Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.
9/2018	Clarified coding information.
7/2018	Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.
10/2017	Annual policy review. New references added.
7/2016	Annual policy review. New references added.
2/2015	Annual policy review. New references added.
3/2014	Annual policy review. New references added.
11/2011-4/2012	Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements.
6/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group – Orthopedics, Rehabilitation and Rheumatology. No changes to policy statements.
2/2/2011	Medical Policy 509 created.

Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies

Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:

[Medical Policy Terms of Use](#)

[Managed Care Guidelines](#)

[Indemnity/PPO Guidelines](#)

[Clinical Exception Process](#)

[Medical Technology Assessment Guidelines](#)

References

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