Medical Policy
Eyelid Thermal Pulsation for the Treatment of Dry Eye Syndrome

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Policy Number: 613
BCBSA Reference Number: 9.03.29 (For Plan internal use only)
NCD/LCD: N/A

Related Policies
None

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

Eyelid thermal pulsation therapy to treat dry eye syndrome is 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Coverage Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial PPO and Indemnity</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare HMO BlueSM</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare PPO BlueSM</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Codes</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0207T</td>
<td>Evacuation of meibomian glands, automated, using heat and intermittent pressure, unilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0330T</td>
<td>Tear film imaging, unilateral or bilateral, with interpretation and report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0507T</td>
<td>Near-infrared dual imaging (ie, simultaneous reflective and trans-illuminated light) of meibomian glands, unilateral or bilateral, with interpretation and report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

**Dry Eye Syndrome**

Dry eye syndrome, dry eye disease, or dysfunctional tear syndrome, either alone or in combination with other conditions, is a frequent cause of ocular irritation that leads patients to seek ophthalmologic care. It is estimated to affect between 5% and 50% of the population worldwide. Based on data from 2013, an estimated 16.4 million Americans have dry eye syndrome. The prevalence of dry eye syndrome increases with age, especially in postmenopausal women. For both sexes, prevalence is more than 3 times higher in individuals 50 years of age or older compared to those 18 to 49 years of age. Meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD) is considered to be the most common cause of dry eye syndrome. Prevention and treatment of dry eye syndrome are expected to be of greater importance as the population ages.

**Treatment**

Current treatment options for MGD include physical expression to relieve the obstruction, administration of heat (warm compresses) to the eyelids to liquefy solidified meibomian gland contents, eyelid scrubs to relieve external meibomian gland orifice blockage, and medications (eg, antibiotics, topical corticosteroids) to mitigate infection and inflammation of the eyelids. These treatment options, however, have shown limited clinical efficacy, and often require a trial-and-error approach. For example, physical expression can be very painful given the amount of force needed to express obstructed glands. Warm compress therapy can be time-consuming and labor intensive, and there is limited evidence that medications relieve MGD. While the symptoms of dry eye syndrome often improve with treatment, the disease usually is not curable and may lead to substantial patient and physician frustration. Dry eyes can be a cause of visual morbidity and may compromise results of corneal, cataract, and refractive surgery. Inadequate treatment of dry eye syndrome may result in increased ocular discomfort, blurred vision, reduced quality of life, and decreased productivity.

**Summary**

Thermal pulsation is a treatment option for meibomian gland dysfunction. Meibomian gland dysfunction is recognized as the major cause of dry eye syndrome. Thermal pulsation applies heat to the palpebral surfaces of the upper and lower eyelids directly over the meibomian glands, while simultaneously applying graded pulsatile pressure to the outer eyelid surfaces, thereby expressing the meibomian glands.

For individuals who have dry eye symptoms consistent with meibomian gland dysfunction who receive eyelid thermal pulsation, the evidence includes 4 randomized controlled trials (RCTs), a nonrandomized comparison study, and longer term follow-up of patients from RCTs and observational studies. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, morbid events, and functional outcomes. The trials do not provide strong evidence of long-term efficacy. Two RCTs have demonstrated positive findings for most outcome measures over the short term (up to 3 months). Observational studies have shown sustained treatment effects for most outcomes up to 3 years. The nonrandomized study showed similar outcomes for eyelid thermal pulsation.
and standard treatment. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

**Policy History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/2023</td>
<td>Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2023</td>
<td>Annual policy review. PA information section clarified to include Medicare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2022</td>
<td>Annual policy review. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2021</td>
<td>Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2021</td>
<td>Medicare information removed. See MP #132 Medicare Advantage Management for local coverage determination and national coverage determination reference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/2020</td>
<td>Annual policy review. Description, summary, and references updated. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/2018</td>
<td>Clarified coding information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2017</td>
<td>Annual policy review. New references added.</td>
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**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**