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OVERVIEW

Endometrial ablation is a potential alternative to hysterectomy for menorrhagia. A variety of approaches are available; these are generally classified into hysteroscopic techniques (e.g., Nd-YAG laser, electro-surgical rollerball) and nonhysteroscopic techniques (e.g., cryosurgical, radiofrequency [RF] ablation).

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

Medicare Advantage Plans and Commercial Products

Endometrial ablation, with or without hysteroscopic guidance, using a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved device may be considered medically necessary in women with abnormal uterine bleeding who are not candidates for, or who are unresponsive to, hormone therapy and would otherwise be considered candidates for hysterectomy.

COVERAGE

Benefits may vary between groups and contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Benefit Booklet, Evidence of Coverage or Subscriber Agreement for applicable not medically necessary/ not covered benefits/coverage.

BACKGROUND

Ablation or destruction of the endometrium is used to treat menorrhagia in women who failed standard therapy. It is considered a less invasive alternative to hysterectomy; however, as with hysterectomy, the procedure is not recommended for women who wish to preserve their fertility.

Multiple energy sources have been used. These include: Nd-YAG laser, a resecting loop using electric current, electric rollerball, and thermal ablation devices. Endometrial ablation is typically preceded by hormonal treatment to thin the endometrium.

Techniques for endometrial ablation are generally divided into 2 categories: those that do require hysteroscopic procedures and those that do not. (Other terminology for these categories of techniques include first-generation versus second-generation procedures and resectoscopic versus nonresectoscopic endometrial ablation methods). Hysteroscopic techniques were developed first; the initial technique was photovaporization of the endometrium using an Nd-YAG laser. This was followed by electro-surgical ablation using an electrical rollerball or electrical wire loop. (The latter technique is also known as transcervical resection of the endometrium.) Hydrothermal ablation also involves hysteroscopy. Hysteroscopic techniques require skilled surgeons and, due to the requirement for cervical dilation, use of general or regional anesthesia. In addition, the need for the instillation of hypotonic distension media creates a risk of pulmonary edema and hyponatremia such that very accurate monitoring of fluids is required.

Nonhysteroscopic techniques can be performed without general anesthesia and do not involve use of a fluid distention medium. Techniques include thermal fluid-filled balloon, cryosurgical endometrial ablation, instillation of heated saline, and RF ablation.

There are concerns about maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality associated with pregnancy after endometrial ablation. Thus, FDA approval of endometrial ablation devices includes only women for whom childbearing is complete.

RCTs, and systematic reviews of RCT data, have found that hysterectomy resulted in greater symptom relief and fewer reoperations than endometrial ablation, but endometrial ablation resulted in a reasonable level of symptom control and the procedure has some advantages over hysterectomy, eg, women are able to retain their uterus and avoid a more invasive procedure. A meta-analysis of RCTs suggest similar benefits with first-generation (hysteroscopic) techniques and second-generation (mainly nonhysteroscopic) techniques. The evidence is sufficient to determine qualitatively that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in the net health outcome.

CODING

Medicare Advantage Plans and Commercial Products

The following CPT code(s) are covered when billed with one of the ICD 10 codes* listed below:

- 58353** Endometrial ablation, thermal, without hysteroscopic guidance.
- 58356** Endometrial cryoablation with ultrasonic guidance, including endometrial curettage, when performed.
- 58563** Hysteroscopy, surgical with endometrial ablation (e.g., endometrial resection, electrosurgical ablation, thermoablation)

*Covered ICD-10 codes

N92.0-N92.64

N93.8

N93.9

RELATED POLICIES

None

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, April 2023

Provider Update, June 2022

Provider Update, March 2021

Provider Update, March 2020

Provider Update, April 2019

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