

Medical Coverage Policy



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Rhode Island

Allergy Testing

Device/Equipment Drug Medical Surgery Test Other

Effective Date:	2/18/8	Policy Last Updated:	11/1/2011
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Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.

Prospective review is not required.

POLICY

Description:

Food allergies are defined as an inappropriate or exaggerated reaction of the immune system to a food. This policy refers only to allergy tests listed as not medically necessary due to insufficient evidence in published, peer-reviewed literature to support use, and may not be all-inclusive.

Antigen leukocyte cellular antibody (ALCAT) automated food test:

The ALCAT automated food test is a whole blood automated assay that measures blood cell reactions to food, chemical, and microbiological allergens. Specific antigens are individually incubated into samples of whole blood and an electronic counter is used to measure the change in the number and size of white blood cells. Positive test results are theorized to correlate with specific allergen sensitivities.

Cytotoxic leukocyte test:

The cytotoxic leukocyte test (also known as Bryan's Test, leukocytotoxicity test, leukocytic food allergy test, cytotoxic test, metabolic intolerance test, or sensitivity testing) involves adding a food allergen to a blood sample. The sample is then examined under a microscope at various intervals to verify if the white blood cells (leukocytes) have changed shape or were destroyed. The theory is that any change in the blood cells is a sign of allergy to the particular food.

Cytotoxic leukocyte testing has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Electrodermal testing:

Electrodermal testing (also known as electro-acupuncture or VEGA test) measures changes in skin resistance when exposed to a food or inhaled allergen. A slight change in the electrical impedance of the skin is thought to indicate the presence of an allergy.

Food Immune Complex Assay (FICA):

The food immune complex assay test checks for food attached to antibodies in the blood. Results are unproven as they do not always correlate with a disease.

IgG/IgG4 antibody tests:

The IgG/IgG4 tests a finger blood sample to determine IgG responses to 30 different foods. Responses are listed by severity from borderline to severe.

Provocative Food Testing:

A diluted sample of the suspected food allergen is placed under the tongue or injected under the skin. Reactions to the test dose are observed to look for the appearance of symptoms that corresponded to the patient's original complaint. If symptoms appear, a larger dose is administered in the belief that the reaction may be neutralized.

Medical Criteria:

The tests listed below are considered not medically necessary as there is insufficient evidence in published, peer-reviewed literature to support use:

- Antigen leukocyte cellular antibody (ALCAT) automated food test
- Cytotoxic leukocyte test
- Electrodermal testing
- Food Immune Complex Assay (FICA)
- IgG/IgG4 antibody tests
- Provocative Food Testing

Policy Guidelines:

The tests listed in this policy are considered **not medically necessary** as there is insufficient evidence in published, peer-reviewed literature to support use.

Coverage:

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate member certificate, subscriber agreements, or benefit booklet for applicable "Not Medically Necessary Services."

Codes:

The following codes are **not medically necessary**:

86001

95012

There is no specific CPT code regarding cytotoxic leukocyte testing.

Also Known As:

Applied kinesiology,
Bryan's Test
Cytotoxic test
Desensitization
Intracutaneous Progressive Dilution Food Test (IPDFT)
Leukocytotoxicity test
Leukocytic food allergy test
Metabolic intolerance test
NuTron testing
Provocation-neutralization tests
Pulse Test
Sensitivity testing
Sublingual testing

Related Topics:

Not applicable.

Published:

Policy Update, April 2006

Policy Update, May 2007

Policy Update, April 2008

Provider Update, June 2009

Provider Update, February 2011

Provider Update, January 2012

References:

American Academy of Allergy Asthma Immunology. AAAAI Work Group Report: Current Approach to the Diagnosis and Management of Adverse Reactions to Foods. October 2003. Last retrieved on 9/27/11: <http://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF%20Documents/Practice%20and%20Parameters/Adverse-reactions-to-foods-DM-2003.pdf>.

American College of Allergy Asthma Immunology. Last retrieved on 9/27/11: <http://acaai.org/>.

Cytotoxicity Testing (Bryan's Test). American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Position Statement. Last retrieved on 9/27/11: <http://web.archive.org/web/19970510224735/www.aaaai.org/profinfo/publicat/position/ps08.html>.

The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network. Last retrieved on 9/27/11: <http://www.foodallergy.org/>.

US Department of Health and Human Services US Food and Drug Administration. CPG Sec. 370.100 Cytotoxic Testing for Allergic Diseases. Last retrieved on 9/27/11: <http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/ComplianceManuals/CompliancePolicyGuidanceManual/ucm123806.htm>.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual. (Rev. 102, 07-02-09). Last retrieved on 9/27/11: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/downloads/ncd103c1_Part2.pdf.

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