



EFFECTIVE DATE: 01|01|2001
POLICY LAST UPDATED: 07|19|2016

OVERVIEW

Biofeedback is a technique intended to teach patients self-regulation of certain physiologic processes not normally considered to be under voluntary control.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

BlueCHiP for Medicare

Biofeedback is covered as medically necessary:

- For the treatment of stress and/or urge incontinence when there is evidence that the pelvic floor musculature is intact, and any of the following:
 - Muscle re-education of specific muscle groups;
 - Treatment of pathological muscle abnormalities of spasticity, incapacitating muscle spasm, or weakness, and more conventional treatments (heat, cold, massage, exercise, support) have been unsuccessful;
 - Treatment of stress and/or urge incontinence in cognitively intact patients who failed a documented trial of pelvic muscle exercise (PME) training. (A failed trial of PME training is defined as no clinically significant improvement in urinary continence after completing 4 or more weeks of an ordered plan of PME designed to increase periurethral muscle strength). Medicare will allow biofeedback as an initial incontinence treatment modality only when, in the opinion of the physician, that approach is most appropriate and there is documentation of medical justification and rationale for why a PME trial was not attempted first.

Commercial Products

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

BlueCHiP for Medicare

Prior authorization is required.

Commercial Products

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare

Biofeedback is a covered service when the above medical criteria are met.

Biofeedback is considered not medically necessary in the treatment of ordinary muscle tension states, or for psychosomatic conditions, for home use, and for all other conditions not listed above.

Commercial Products

Biofeedback is a contract exclusion/non-covered service.

COVERAGE

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

BACKGROUND

Biofeedback is a technique intended to teach patients self-regulation of certain unconscious or involuntary physiologic processes. The technique involves the feedback of a variety of types of information not normally available to the patient, followed by a concerted effort on the part of the patient to use this feedback to help alter the physiological process in some specific way. Biofeedback has been proposed as a treatment for a variety of diseases and disorders including anxiety, headache (migraine and tension), hypertension, incontinence (fecal and urinary), and movement disorders, pain, Raynaud's disease, asthma, and insomnia.

Biofeedback therapy provides visual, auditory, or other evidence of the status of certain body functions (like heart rate, blood pressure, skin temperature, salivation, peripheral vasomotor activity, and gross muscle tone) so that voluntary control can be exerted over these functions, alleviating the abnormal bodily condition. Biofeedback techniques include peripheral skin temperature feedback, blood-volume-pulse feedback (vasoconstriction and dilation), vasoconstriction training (temporalis artery), and EMG biofeedback; these may be used alone or in conjunction with other therapies (e.g., relaxation, behavioral management, medication).

The type of feedback used in an intervention (e.g., visual, auditory) depends on the nature of the disease or disorder under treatment, the biological variable that the subject is attempting to control, and the information that is fed back to the subject. For example, for tension headaches, electromyographic (EMG) measurement of muscular contraction is used. For migraine headaches, EMG measuring contraction of the frontalis muscle and skin temperature feedback data are used. In hypertension, blood pressure is monitored and the data reported back to the patients. For fecal and urinary incontinence, EMG data are used. In addition, data from anorectal pressure studies are used for fecal incontinence. For movement disorders, pain, and insomnia, EMG measurements are used, and thermal feedback of skin temperature would be used for Raynaud's disease.

BlueCHiP for Medicare

Biofeedback therapy has proven successful for urinary incontinence when all three of the following conditions exist:

- The patient is capable of participation in the plan of care;
- The patient is motivated to actively participate in the plan of care, including being responsive to the care requirements (e.g., practice and follow-through by self or caregiver); and
- The patient's condition is appropriately treated with biofeedback (e.g., pathology does not exist preventing success of treatment).

Patients not showing improvement after 5–6 visits of retraining with biofeedback are not likely to improve with additional sessions. Additional documentation would be necessary to justify biofeedback services beyond 5–6 visits.

CODING

The following codes require preauthorization for BlueCHiP for Medicare and are a contract exclusion for Commercial products:

90901

90911

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products

The following codes are non-covered:

90875

90876
E0746

RELATED POLICIES

Not applicable

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, September 2016
Provider Update, February 2016
Provider Update, August 2013
Provider Update, May 2012
Provider Update, July 2011
Provider Update, January 2011
Provider Update, May 2009

REFERENCES

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2. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Biofeedback Therapy for the Treatment of Urinary Incontinence (30.1.1)
3. National Government Services, Inc.. Local Coverage Determination (LCD) for Outpatient Physical and Occupational Therapy Services (L33631)
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6. Tan G, Rintala DH, Jensen MP, et al. A randomized controlled trial of hypnosis compared with biofeedback for adults with chronic low back pain. *Eur J Pain*. Feb 2015;19(2):271-280. PMID 24934738
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13. Nestoriuc Y, Martin A. Efficacy of biofeedback for migraine: a meta-analysis. *Pain*. Mar 2007;128(1-2):111-127. PMID 17084028

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