

**Draft**  
**Medical Coverage Policy**



## Vertebral Axial Decompression



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**Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.**

**Prospective review is not required.**

**Description:**

Vertebral axial decompression is a type of lumbar traction that has been investigated as a technique to reduce intradiscal pressure and relieve low back pain associated with herniated lumbar discs or degenerative lumbar disc disease.

A pelvic harness is worn by the patient. The specially equipped table on which the patient lies is slowly extended, and a distraction force is applied via the pelvic harness until the desired tension is reached, followed by a gradual decrease of the tension. The cyclic nature of the treatment allows the patient to withstand stronger distraction forces compared to static lumbar traction techniques. An individual session typically includes 15 cycles of tension, and 10 to 15 daily treatments may be administered.

Examples of vertebral decompression therapy devices include, but may not be limited to:

- Acua-Spina System utilizing Intervertebral Differential Dynamics (IDD Therapy)
- Decompression Reduction Stabilization (DRS) System
- DRX-3000
- DRX9000
- Lordex Traction Unit
- SpineMED Decompression Table
- V DRX 9000
- VAX-D Table

**Medical Criteria:**

None

**Policy:**

[BlueCHiP for Medicare:](#)

Vertebral axial decompression is not covered.

**Commercial Products:**

Vertebral axial decompression is considered not medically necessary as there is insufficient peer-reviewed scientific literature that demonstrates that the procedure is effective.

Vertebral axial decompression **should not be filed** as chiropractic manipulation, nerve decompression surgery, or physical therapy manipulation.

**Coverage:**

Benefits may vary. Please refer to the appropriate Member Certificate, Subscriber Agreement, or Benefit Booklet for applicable not medically necessary service benefits/coverage.

**Codes:**

Providers should report this procedure with HCPCS code S9090. Use of any other code is considered incorrect coding.

The following HCPCS code is not covered for BlueCHIP for Medicare and not medically necessary for Commercial Products:

S9090 Vertebral axial decompression, per session

**Also Known As:**

**(This listing may not be all inclusive.)**

Acua-Spina System utilizing Intervertebral Differential Dynamics (IDD Therapy)

Decompression Reduction Stabilization (DRS) System

DRX-3000

DRX9000

Lordex Traction Unit

SpineMED Decompression Table

V DRX 9000

VAX-D Table

**Published:**

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Provider Update, August 2010

Provider Update, July 2009

Policy Update, May 2008

Policy Update, May 2007

**References:**

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Medical Policy Reference Manual, 8.03.09 Vertebral Axial Decompression Issue: 10/2012

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, **National Coverage Determination (Ncd) For Vertebral Axial Decompression (Vax-D) (160.16)**

**Review History:**

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