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POLICY LAST UPDATED: 04 | 07 | 2015

OVERVIEW

The home uterine activity monitor (HUAM) is a device intended to provide early detection of preterm labor in women at high risk of preterm labor and preterm birth. A monitoring device worn by the patient collects data on uterine activity. After using the device, the patient transmits data recordings to a provider who assesses risk of preterm labor-onset, based on frequency of uterine contractions and responses to interview questions.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

Home uterine activity monitoring, with or without nursing contact, is considered not medically necessary, including use with tocolytic therapy (medications used to slow contractions). Despite numerous scientific studies, there is no evidence that the use of home uterine monitoring improves health outcomes for mother or baby. It has not been shown to improve outcomes for twins, triplets, high-risk situations, or women who have already experienced preterm labor. According to U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, use of these monitors has not been shown to improve gestational age at birth, the baby's weight at birth, or neonatal morbidity.

COVERAGE

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

BACKGROUND

The home uterine activity monitor (HUAM) is a monitoring device that consists of a guard-ring tocodynamometer (worn as a belt around the abdomen), a data recorder, and a data transmitter. Typically, the patient is instructed to use the device daily for two 1-hour periods. After monitoring, the patient transmits the recordings by telephone modem link to a remote base station. Base station nurses not only facilitate transmission and analysis of the monitor tracings, they also maintain daily telephone contact with the patient to assess signs and symptoms and to provide advice and counseling.

Nurses employed in HUAM services look for evidence of the onset of preterm labor, either on the basis of uterine activity exceeding a threshold level or from the findings of a telephone interview with the patient. Signs and symptoms of preterm labor include back pain, increased vaginal discharge, menstrual-like cramps, and pelvic pressure or heaviness. The threshold number of uterine contractions signaling the possible onset of preterm labor is usually 4 to 6 per hour. If signs and symptoms are present or the uterine activity exceeds a certain threshold, patients are instructed to perform the following: empty the bladder, hydrate orally, and assume the left lateral recumbent position. The patient is also instructed to re-monitor for 1 additional hour. If uterine activity still exceeds threshold or signs and symptoms persist, the patient is instructed to see her

physician immediately for a cervical examination. The cervical examination would then play a pivotal role in diagnosing whether preterm labor is occurring and whether to initiate tocolytic therapy.

The HUAM is described as an electronic system for at-home antepartum measurement of uterine contractions, data transmission by telephone to a clinical setting, and for receipt and display of the uterine contraction data at the clinic. The HUAM system comprises a tocotransducer, an at-home recorder, a modem, and a computer and monitor that receive, process and display data. The FDA indicates that the device is intended for use in women at least 24 weeks' gestation with a previous preterm delivery to aid in the detection of preterm labor.

The available evidence suggests that HUAM does not improve health outcomes, and HUAM is not recommended by national organizations. Thus, home uterine activity monitoring can be considered not medically necessary.

CODING

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

The following codes are not medically necessary:

99500

S9001

RELATED POLICIES

Not applicable

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, June 2015

Provider Update, June 2014

Provider Update, May 2013

Provider Update, July 2012

Provider Update, September 2011

Provider Update, November 2010

Provider Update, October 2009

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3. A multicenter randomized controlled trial of home uterine monitoring: active versus sham device. The Collaborative Home Uterine Monitoring Study (CHUMS) Group. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 1995; 173(4):1120-7.
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7. Nagey DA, Bailey-Jones C, Herman AA. Randomized comparison of home uterine activity monitoring and routine care in patients discharged after treatment for preterm labor. *Obstet Gynecol* 1993; 82(3):319-23.

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