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OVERVIEW

Disposable, non-powered mechanical negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT) or single-use, non-electrically powered negative pressure wound therapy have been proposed for the treatment of smaller wounds. These devices can be used in the hospital, outpatient, and/or home settings.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare

Use of non-powered NPWT systems for the treatment of acute or chronic wounds is not covered, as they do not meet the durable medical equipment (DME) benefit durability requirement.

Commercial Products

Use of non-powered NPWT systems for the treatment of acute or chronic wounds is considered not medically necessary, as there is insufficient peer-reviewed literature to support the efficacy of the service.

COVERAGE

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

BACKGROUND

Negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT) devices can be classified as either powered (i.e., requiring an external power source), or non-powered (i.e., mechanical). The focus of this policy is on disposable, non-powered, mechanical NPWT.

NPWT consists of the use of a negative pressure therapy or suction device to aspirate and remove fluids, debris, and infectious materials from the wound bed to promote the formation of granulation tissue. The devices may also be used as an adjunct to surgical therapy or as an alternative to surgery in a debilitated patient. Although the exact mechanism has not been elucidated, it is hypothesized that negative pressure contributes to wound healing by removing excess interstitial fluid, increasing the vascularity of the wound, reducing edema, and/or creating beneficial mechanical forces that lead to cell growth and expansion.

The management and treatment of chronic wounds, including decubitus ulcers, remain a treatment challenge. Most chronic wounds will heal only if the underlying cause, i.e., venous stasis, pressure, infection, etc., is addressed. In addition, cleaning the wound to remove nonviable tissue, microorganisms, and foreign bodies is essential to create the optimal conditions for either re-epithelialization (i.e., healing by secondary intention) or preparation for wound closure with skin grafts or flaps (i.e., healing by primary intention). Therefore,

debridement, irrigation, whirlpool treatments, and wet-to-dry dressings are common components of chronic wound care.

The following are non-powered, mechanical NPWT systems:

- **Smart Negative Pressure (SNaP)[®] Wound Care System:** The Smart Negative Pressure (SNaP) Wound Care System (Spiracur, Sunnyvale, CA) is portable and lightweight (3 oz) and can be worn underneath clothing. This system consists of a cartridge, dressing, and strap; the cartridge acts as the negative pressure source. The system is reported to generate negative pressure levels similar to other NPWT systems. This system is fully disposable.
- **PICO[™] Single Use Negative Pressure Wound Therapy:** PICO Single Use Negative Pressure Wound Therapy (Smith and Nephew, St. Petersburg, FL) is a pocket-sized, disposable, single-use NPWT system. The PICO device consists of a small, portable pump with a lifespan of up to 7 days. The PICO pump generates an effective negative pressure of 80mmHg yet is small enough to fit discretely into a pocket.
- **V.A.C.Via[™] Therapy System:** V.A.C. Via Therapy System (KCI, San Antonio, TX) is a portable, single-patient-use NPWT device that offers 7 days of therapy. It provides dynamic pressure control and continuous negative pressure options of 75mmHg or 125mmHg. The system is designed for moderate- to low-severity wounds.
- **ciSNaP[®] Closed Incision System:** ciSNaP Closed Incision System (Spiracur, Sunnyvale, CA) is a single-use, portable, non-powered, disposable NPWT system that is intended for wound management through the removal of small amounts of exudate from surgically closed incisions.

Reports with small numbers of patients using the non-powered (mechanical), gauze-based NPWT system are insufficient to draw conclusions about its impact on net health outcome, both for the device itself and in comparison with current care. There are important unanswered questions about efficacy and tolerability. Well-designed comparative studies with larger numbers of patients are needed. Since the impact on net health outcome compared to existing technology is not known, non-powered (mechanical) NPWT is considered not medically necessary.

CODING

The following code is not medically necessary for Commercial Products and is not covered for BlueCHIP for Medicare, as it does not meet the DME benefit durability requirement:

A9272

RELATED POLICIES

Preauthorization via Web-Based Tool for Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, January 2017
Provider Update, May 2015
Provider Update, January 2015
Provider Update, February 2014
Provider Update, February 2013
Provider Update, September 2011
Provider Update, December 2010

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