

Medical Coverage Policy



Membrane Diffusion Capacity

Device/Equipment Drug Medical Surgery Test Other

Effective Date:	6/1/2009	Policy Last Updated:	4/5/2011
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Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.

Prospective review is not required.

Description:

Lung diffusion testing measures the "diffusing capacity of the lung for carbon monoxide" or DLCO. A small quantity of carbon monoxide is inhaled then rapidly exhaled. The single exhaled gas is analyzed to determine how much carbon monoxide was absorbed during the breath. DLCO is a measure of the lung's surface area available for diffusion, the thickness of the alveolar capillary barrier, and the blood volume in the pulmonary capillaries. It is used for evaluating the effect of therapy in pulmonary vascular and interstitial diseases and determining the progression of parenchymal disease in patients with obstructive lung diseases.

The membrane diffusion capacity is a technique that involves two single-breath DLCO measurements. The first single-breath DLCO measurement is performed using the standard method mentioned above. The second-breath measurement is performed after the patient has inhaled elevated oxygen concentrations for 5 minutes.¹

The clinical efficacy of the membrane diffusion capacity test has not been established.

Medical Criteria:

Not applicable.

Policy:

Membrane diffusion capacity is considered **not medically necessary** as there is insufficient peer-reviewed evidence to support its effectiveness.

Coverage:

Benefits may vary between groups and contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage, Subscriber Agreement for the applicable *Services Not Medically Necessary* benefits/coverage.

Coding:

The following code is considered not medically necessary:**94725**

Published:

Provider Update, Mar 2009
Provider Update, Jun 2010
Provider Update, May 2011

References:

1. CPT Assist November 2008. *Coding Clarification: Pulmonary Procedures 94720 vs. Code 94725*. Retrieved 5/21/09

National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health: Lung Diffusion Testing. Retrieved 1/6/09 from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003854.htm>

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