

Medical Coverage Policy | Occipital Nerve Stimulation - Insertion



EFFECTIVE DATE: 06|01|2015

POLICY LAST UPDATED: 05|19|2015

OVERVIEW

Occipital nerve stimulation (ONS) delivers a small electrical charge to the occipital nerve in an attempt to treat migraines and other headaches in patients who have not responded to medications. This policy is intended to document the insertion or implantation of the device as not medically necessary.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Not applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products

Occipital nerve stimulation is considered not medically necessary as there is insufficient peer-reviewed scientific literature that demonstrates that the procedure is effective.

Revision or replacement of an occipital nerve stimulator is considered not medically necessary as the initial implantation procedure is also not medically necessary.

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 ONS device consists of a subcutaneously implanted pulse generator (in the chest wall or abdomen) attached to extension leads that are tunneled to join electrodes placed across one or both occipital nerves at the base of the skull. Continuous or intermittent stimulation may be used.

As of September 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not cleared any occipital nerve stimulation device for treatment of headache.

At this time the available evidence is insufficient to permit conclusions concerning the impact of ONS on net health outcome. In addition, no implanted occipital nerve stimulators have received FDA approval. Therefore, ONS is considered not medically necessary.

CODING

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products

There is no specific CPT or HCPCS code for occipital nerve stimulation, therefore providers should report this service with an unlisted procedure code.

64999

If the following CPT or HCPCS codes are used to report occipital nerve stimulation with the diagnosis codes below, they will be considered not medically necessary:

61885
61886
64553
64568
64569
95970
95974
L8679
L8680
L8681
L8682
L8683
L8685
L8686
L8687
L8688
L8689

Effective April 1, 2014 this code is no longer separately billable. Use alternate code 63650.

The following **ICD-9-CM** diagnosis codes are not medically necessary for the treatment of occipital nerve stimulation:



Occipital Nerve
Stimulation ICD 9 Cod

The following **ICD-10-CM** diagnosis codes are not medically necessary for the treatment of occipital nerve stimulation:



Occipital Nerve
Stimulation ICD 10 Cc

RELATED POLICIES

Preauthorization via Web-Based Tool for Procedures

PUBLISHED

Provider Update, July 2015
Provider Update, September 2014
Provider Update, January 2014
Provider Update, January 2013
Provider Update, January 2012

REFERENCES

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2. Silberstein SD, Dodick DW, Saper J et al. Safety and efficacy of peripheral nerve stimulation of the occipital nerves for the management of chronic migraine: results from a randomized, multicenter, double-blinded, controlled study. *Cephalalgia* 2012; 32(16):1165-79.
3. Serra G, Marchioretto F. Occipital nerve stimulation for chronic migraine: a randomized trial. *Pain Physician* 2012; 15(3):245-53.

4. Burns B, Watkins L, Goadsby PJ. Treatment of hemicrania continua by occipital nerve stimulation with a bion device: longterm follow-up of a crossover study. *Lancet Neurol* 2008; 7(11):1001-12.
5. Schwedt TJ, Dodick DW, Hentz J et al. Occipital nerve stimulation for chronic headache--long-term safety and efficacy. *Cephalalgia* 2007; 27(2):153-7.
6. Schwedt TJ, Dodick DW, Trentman TL et al. Response to occipital nerve block is not useful in predicting efficacy of occipital nerve stimulation. *Cephalalgia* 2007; 27(3):271-4.
7. Trentman TL, Rosenfeld DM, Vargas BB et al. Greater occipital nerve stimulation via the Bion microstimulator: implantation technique and stimulation parameters. *Clinical trial: NCT00205894. Pain Physician* 2009; 12(3):621-8.
8. Burns B, Watkins L, Goadsby PJ. Treatment of intractable chronic cluster headache by occipital nerve stimulation in 14 patients. *Neurology* 2009; 72(4):341-5.
9. Mueller OM, Gaul C, Katsarava Z et al. Occipital nerve stimulation for the treatment of chronic cluster headache - lessons learned from 18 months experience. *Cen Eur Neurosurg* 2011; 72(2):84-9.
10. Magis D, Gerardy PY, Remacle JM et al. Sustained effectiveness of occipital nerve stimulation in drug-resistant chronic cluster headache. *Headache* 2011; 51(8):1191-201.

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