

# Medical Coverage Policy



## Spinal Cord Stimulation

Device/Equipment  Drug  Medical  Surgery  Test  Other

Effective Date:	10/16/2007	Policy Last Updated:	3/5/2013
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**Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.**

**Prospective review is not required.**

### Description:

Spinal cord stimulation is used to interfere with the transmission of pain signals to the brain and to provide relief from chronic pain. The sensation of pain is blocked by applying low-voltage electrical impulses to stimulate targeted nerves along the spinal cord. The repetitive electrical impulses are delivered to the spinal cord using an electronic device connected to a strip of electrodes surgically implanted in the epidural space. A magnetic remote control is used to turn the current on/off and to adjust the current for optimal pain relief.

Treatment is a two-step process. Initially a trial procedure is performed to assess effectiveness in the specific patient. This surgical procedure is typically performed in an outpatient hospital or day-surgery center. Length of the trial period depends on severity of pain and physician determination, but most trials range from a few days to several weeks.

A good outcome after a trial procedure is defined as pain relief of 50 per cent or better. If the initial procedure is successful, a permanent stimulator is implanted.

### Guidelines for the use of spinal cord stimulation:

- Treatment is used only as a last resort after other treatment modalities (pharmacological, surgical, psychological, or physical, if applicable) have been tried and have failed, or, are judged to be unsuitable or contraindicated;
- Pain is neuropathic in nature; (i.e. resulting from damage to the peripheral nerves);
- No untreated drug addictions;
- Demonstration of pain relief with a temporarily implanted electrode precedes permanent implantation, and
- Initial trial resulted in at least 50 per cent improvement in pain relief.

Spinal cord stimulation for the treatment of critical limb ischemia as a technique to forestall amputation is not covered due to insufficient evident demonstrating clinical efficacy.

Spinal cord stimulators (generator or receiver) are typically replaced every two to three years.

### Medical Criteria:

Not applicable.

**Policy:**

Spinal cord stimulation is medically necessary with no preauthorization required.

**Coverage:**

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate member certificate/subscriber agreement/Rite Care contract for the applicable surgical and machine/diagnostic benefit/coverage.

**Coding:**

The following codes are covered under the member's surgery benefit/coverage:

63650

63655

63661

63662

63663

63664

63685

63688

L8680

The following codes are applied to the member's machine/diagnostic tests benefit/coverage:

95970

95971

95972

95973

**Also known as:**

N/A

**Related topics:**

N/A

**Published:**

Policy Update, May 2013

Policy Update, December 2007

Policy Update, February 2007

Policy Update, December 2006

Policy Update, December 2005

**References:**

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Forouzanfar T, Kemler MA, Weber WEJ, Kessels AGH, van Kleef M. Spinal cord stimulation in complex regional pain syndrome: cervical and lumbar devices are comparable effective. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*;2004;92(3):348-353.

Kemler MA, Barendse GAM, van Kleef M, de Vet HCW, Rijks CPM, Furnee DA, van den Wildenberg FAJM. Spinal Cord Stimulation in Patients with Chronic Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2000;9:343:618-624.

Kemler MA, Barendse GAM, van Kleef M, de Vet HCW, Rijks CPM, Furnee DA, van den Wildenberg FAJM. Spinal Cord Stimulation in Patients with Chronic Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy - Five Year Follow-Up. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2006;6:354:2394-2396.

Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual;Chapter 1, Part 2 (Sections 90 – 160.26) Coverage Determinations;(Rev. 150, 11-30-12). Accessed 2/13/13:

[http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/ncd103c1\\_Part2.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/ncd103c1_Part2.pdf)

Myerson BA. Mechanisms of spinal cord stimulation in neuropathic pain. *Neurological Research*. April 2000.

**History:**

3/5/13	Annual Review
11/16/07	Policy changed from medical to reimbursement
11/19/06	Annual Review
11/6/05	Annual Review
10/1/04	New policy approved

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