Vagal Nerve Stimulation

Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.

Prospective review is not required.

Description:

Vagal nerve stimulation (VNS) therapy uses a device implanted under the skin in the left chest area. This device sends mild, intermittent electrical impulses through a lead to the left vagus nerve, which then sends signals to the brain. The device is programmed individually by the neurologist for each patient, and the patient has the ability to either initiate or abort stimulation with the use of a hand held magnet. The patient may also increase the electrical impulses if he or she feels a seizure is forthcoming.

VNS therapy has been investigated as an alternative treatment in individuals with medically refractory partial onset seizures who:
- have failed pharmacologic management, and
- have failed or are not suitable candidates for surgical management.

There is demonstration of efficacy in a select subset of patients with epilepsy.

The use of VNS therapy as a treatment for depression has been studied. At this time there is insufficient medical literature to support the efficacy of this treatment for depression.

Medical Criteria:

None

Policy:

VNS is medically necessary as an adjunctive therapy in reducing the frequency of seizures in adults and adolescents over the age of twelve who have partial onset seizures that are refractory to antiepileptic medications.
Vagal nerve stimulation treatment for all other conditions, including treatment for depression, is **not medically necessary.**

**Preauthorization is not required or recommended.**

**Coverage:**

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate member certificate/subscriber agreement/Rite Care contract for applicable diagnostic imaging, lab, and machine tests or surgery coverage/benefits.

**Coding:**

61885, 61886, 61888, 64553, 64573, 64568, 64569, 64570, 95974, 95975

L8680 Implantable neurostimulator electrode, each
L8681 Patient programmer (external) for use with implantable programmable neurostimulator pulse generator
L8682 Implantable neurostimulator radiofrequency receiver
L8683 Radiofrequency transmitter (external) for use with implantable neurostimulator radiofrequency receiver
L8685 Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, single array, rechargeable, includes extension
L8686 Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, single array, non-rechargeable, includes extension
L8687 Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, dual array, rechargeable, includes extension
L8688 Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, dual array, non-rechargeable, includes extension
L8689 External recharging system for battery (internal) for use with implantable neurostimulator

**Also Known As:**

NCP
NeuroCybernetic prosthesis
Vagal nerve stimulation
Vagal nerve stimulation for epilepsy, NeuroCybernetic prosthesis

**Related Topics:**

Not applicable

**Published:**
Policy Update, Nov 2002
Policy Update, Sep 2005
Policy Update, Aug 2006
Policy Update, Oct 2007
References:

2005 TEC Assessment; Tab 8.


Vagal nerve stimulation for epilepsy:


Vagal nerve stimulation for depression:


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