Medical Coverage Policies

Visual Acuity Screening for Children Aged 3-5 Years

Effective Date: 12/01/2004  
Last Updated: 02/05/2008

Description:

Visual acuity refers to the clarity or clearness of the vision, a measure of how well a person sees. Visual acuity testing is used to determine how well a person can see at various distances using a Snellen's chart. The Snellen's chart is the familiar eye test with block letters that decrease in size corresponding to the distance at which the line of letters is normally visible.

Visual acuity testing is normally performed as part of a pediatric preventive (well-child) visit. When acuity is measured as part of a general ophthalmological service or an evaluation/management service of the eye, it is a diagnostic examination and not a screening test, and should be reported using the appropriate ophthalmological service code (92002, 92004, 92012, 92014, 92081, 92082, or 92083) or evaluation and management codes (99201 to 99215).

Medical Criteria:

Not applicable. This is a claims payment policy only.

Policy:

Visual acuity testing (99173) is a covered, separately reimbursable service when performed in conjunction with a preventive medicine service code (99382, 99383, 99392, 99393) for patients aged 3-5 years.

Visual acuity screening is considered integral to an evaluation and management service or a preventive medicine examination in age groups other than 3-5 years and is not separately reimbursable for patients other than those described above.

Coverage:

Please refer to the appropriate Member Certificate/Subscriber Agreement/Rtte Care Contract for applicable coverage/benefits.

Benefit Application:

Visual acuity testing (99173) is a covered, separately reimbursable service for children 3-5 years of age when performed in conjunction with a preventive medicine service code (99382, 99383, 99392, 99393).

Visual acuity testing (99173) should not be reported in conjunction with visual function screening (99172).

Also known as:

Vision screening

Related topics:

Not applicable

Published:

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