

Medical Coverage Policy | Home Uterine Activity Monitoring



EFFECTIVE DATE: 11|22|2004
POLICY LAST UPDATED: 03|19|2014

OVERVIEW

The home uterine activity monitor (HUAM) is a device intended to provide early detection of preterm labor in women at high risk of preterm labor and preterm birth. A monitoring device worn by the patient collects data on uterine activity. After using the device, the patient transmits data recordings to a provider who assesses risk of preterm labor-onset, based on frequency of uterine contractions and responses to interview questions.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Not applicable.

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

Home uterine activity monitoring, with or without nursing contact, is considered **not medically necessary**, including use with tocolytic therapy (medications used to slow contractions). Despite numerous scientific studies, there is no evidence that the use of home uterine monitoring improves health outcomes for mother or baby. It has not been shown to improve outcomes for twins, triplets, high-risk situations, or women who have already experienced preterm labor. According to US Preventive Services Task Force, use of these monitors has not been shown to improve gestational age at birth, the baby's weight at birth, or neonatal morbidity.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

The home uterine activity monitor (HUAM) is a monitoring device that consists of a guard-ring tocodynamometer (worn as a belt around the abdomen), a data recorder, and a data transmitter. Typically, the patient is instructed to use the device daily for two 1-hour periods. After monitoring, the patient transmits the recordings by telephone modem link to a remote base station. Base station nurses not only facilitate transmission and analysis of the monitor tracings, they also maintain daily telephone contact with the patient to assess signs and symptoms and to provide advice and counseling.

Nurses employed in HUAM services look for evidence of the onset of preterm labor, either on the basis of uterine activity exceeding a threshold level or from the findings of a telephone interview with the patient. Signs and symptoms of preterm labor include back pain, increased vaginal discharge, menstrual-like cramps, and pelvic pressure or heaviness. The threshold number of uterine contractions signaling the possible onset of preterm labor is usually 4 to 6 per hour. If signs and symptoms are present or the uterine activity exceeds a certain threshold, patients are instructed to perform the following: empty the bladder, hydrate orally, and assume the left lateral recumbent position. The patient is also instructed to remonitor for 1 additional hour. If uterine activity still exceeds threshold or signs and symptoms persist, the patient is instructed to see her physician immediately for a cervical examination. The cervical examination would then play a pivotal role in diagnosing whether preterm labor is occurring and whether to initiate tocolytic therapy.

The HUAM is described as an electronic system for at-home antepartum measurement of uterine contractions, data transmission by telephone to a clinical setting, and for receipt and display of the uterine contraction data at the clinic. The HUAM system comprises a tocotransducer, an at-home recorder, a modem, and a computer and monitor that receive, process and display data. The FDA indicates that the device is intended for use in women at least 24 weeks' gestation with a previous preterm delivery to aid in the detection of preterm labor.

The available evidence suggests that HUAM does not improve health outcomes, and HUAM is not recommended by national organizations. Thus, home uterine activity monitoring can be considered not medically necessary.

COVERAGE

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts, please refer to the appropriate Member Certificate, Subscriber Agreement, or Benefit Booklet for the applicable not medically necessary services benefits/coverage.

CODING

The following codes are **not medically necessary for BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial:**

99500, S9001

RELATED POLICIES

Not applicable.

PUBLISHED

Provider Update	Jun 2014
Provider Update	May 2013
Provider Update	Jul 2012
Provider Update	Sep 2011
Provider Update	Nov 2010
Provider Update	Oct 2009
Provider Update	Oct 2008
Provider Update	Feb 2008
Policy Update	Nov 2006
Policy Update	Sep 2002

REFERENCES

1. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Medical Policy Reference Manual, Policy No 4.01.09
2. Honest H, Forbes CA, Duree KH et al. Screening to prevent spontaneous preterm birth: systematic reviews of accuracy and effectiveness literature with economic modeling. *Health Technol Assess* 2009; 13(43):1-627.
3. Urquhart C, Currell R, Harlow F et al. Home uterine monitoring for detecting preterm labour. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2012;5:CD006172.

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