

Medical Coverage Policy | Injectable Bulking Agent for Fecal Incontinence



EFFECTIVE DATE: 02|05|2013

POLICY LAST UPDATED: 02|05|2013

OVERVIEW

Injectable bulking agents are space-filling substances used to increase tissue bulk. They can be injected perianally to treat fecal incontinence.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Prior Authorization is not required.

POLICY STATEMENT

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

Injectable bulking agents in the treatment of fecal incontinence are considered not medically necessary as there is insufficient evidence in published peer reviewed medical literature to support its use.

MEDICAL CRITERIA

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

Fecal incontinence is defined as the unintentional loss of flatus, liquid, or stool. Although it is considered a benign disorder, severe fecal incontinence is a distressing and socially isolating medical condition. The loss of control of one's bowels reduces the quality of life and psychological well being. Individuals who suffer from this condition often alter their lifestyle to minimize the likelihood of bowel accidents in public places. Over time, this can result in progressive social isolation and work incapacity.

Fecal incontinence can occur at any age, but is most common among people over the age of 65. Vaginal delivery childbirth is a major cause of fecal incontinence as childbirth may result in damage to the anal sphincter.

Several treatments have reported good results. If an underlying condition is causing fecal incontinence, treating the condition may bring relief. If there is no underlying condition, or if treating the underlying condition does not work, suppositories or enemas may help. Sphincter damage caused by childbirth is often effectively treated with surgery, as are other kinds of incontinence related sphincter injuries. Sometimes surgical treatment requires building an artificial sphincter using a thigh muscle. Biofeedback training has also been investigated.

Studies using injectable bulking agents have been run with limited results. At this time studies are limited and inconclusive. Therefore injectable bulking agents in the treatment of fecal incontinence are not medically necessary due to insufficient evidence in published peer reviewed medical literature to support its use.

COVERAGE

Benefits may vary. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage, Subscriber Agreement, or benefit booklet for applicable "Not Medically Necessary" services.

CODING

BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

The following code is not medically necessary for all BCBSRI products:

L8605

RELATED POLICIES

Preventive Services for Commercial Members

Preventive Services for BlueCHiP Members

PUBLISHED

Policy Update

Apr 2013

REFERENCES

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3. National Association for Continence. Accessed 1/3/13: <http://www.nafc.org/index.php?page=fecal-incontinence>.
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6. Vaizey CJ, Kamm MA. Injectable bulking agents for treating faecal incontinence. *British Journal of Surgery*;2005 May;92(5):521-7.

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