Medical Policy
High-Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein

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Policy Number: 032
BCBSA Reference Number: NA

Related Policies
None

Policy
Commercial and Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Measurement of high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP) for assessment of coronary artery disease risk may be MEDICALLY NECESSARY in patients who meet all the following criteria:
- The patient must have undergone previous traditional risk assessment* and been found to have a 10 year risk of cardiovascular heart disease (CHD) between 10-20% (intermediate risk), AND
- The test is performed in patients considered to be metabolically stable and without obvious inflammatory or infectious conditions, AND
- When the test is performed twice in a twelve month period.

* Traditional cardiac risk assessment should consider: Patient gender, age, total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, smoking status, and personal and family medical history.

Measurement of high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP) for assessment of coronary artery disease risk is considered NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY in all other situations including, but not limited to:
- Patients already identified as high risk, or
- Patients with established coronary artery disease, or
- Serial testing to monitor therapy; or
- Screening asymptomatic individuals among the general population.

Prior Authorization Information
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS)
Prior authorization is NOT required.

Commercial Members: PPO, and Indemnity
Prior authorization is NOT required.

Medicare Members: HMO Blue℠
Prior authorization is NOT required.

Medicare Members: PPO Blue℠
Prior authorization is NOT required.

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD-9 Codes
The following codes are included below for informational purposes. Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement. Please refer to the member’s contract benefits in effect at the time of service to determine coverage or non-coverage as it applies to an individual member.

Providers should report all services using the most up-to-date industry-standard procedure, revenue, and diagnosis codes, including modifiers where applicable.

CPT Codes

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<tr>
<th>CPT codes:</th>
<th>Code Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>86141</td>
<td>C-reactive protein; high sensitivity (hsCRP)</td>
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Description
C-reactive protein (CRP) is an acute phase reactant produced by the liver that has long been used to monitor inflammatory processes, such as infection and autoimmune diseases. Recent studies have suggested that low-level chronic inflammation may play a role in atherogenesis, and thus measurement of CRP has been investigated in various settings of cardiovascular disease, i.e., in patients with known cardiovascular disease, in patients with risk factors for cardiovascular disease, and as a general risk assessment tool for cardiovascular disease. To be used as a risk assessment tool, a greater precision at lower levels of CRP is needed such that the range of values collected in epidemiologic studies can be subdivided into quartiles and quintiles; in this way, the data from large epidemiologic studies can be applied to individual patients. Such technologies are collectively known as high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP).

An example of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein testing for assessment of coronary artery disease risk includes the ELISA test. All measurements of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein for assessment of coronary artery disease risk are considered investigational regardless of the commercial name, the manufacturer or FDA approval status except as noted in the policy statement.

Summary
The existing observational evidence establishes that CRP is an independent predictor of cardiovascular disease across a wide spectrum of patient populations. The evidence also suggests that using CRP as a component of a risk assessment tool will result in a more accurate cardiac risk prediction. While there is no scientific literature that directly tests the hypothesis that measurement of C-reactive protein to assess CHD risk results in improved patient outcomes, following discussion with local practitioners and a review of the existing literature, BCBSMA has determined that measurement of high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP) for assessment of coronary artery disease risk in the patients described in the policy statement is medically necessary.
Policy History

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Information Pertaining to All Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Policies

Click on any of the following terms to access the relevant information:

- Medical Policy Terms of Use
- Managed Care Guidelines
- Indemnity/PPO Guidelines
- Clinical Exception Process
- Medical Technology Assessment Guidelines

References


Endnotes
1. Based on local expert opinion, July 2006.