Medical Policy
Ultrafiltration in Decompensated Heart Failure

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Policy Number: 542
BCBSA Reference Number: 2.02.22

Related Policies
None

Policy
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity
Medicare HMO Blue SM and Medicare PPO Blue SM Members
Ultrafiltration in patients with decompensated heart failure is INVESTIGATIONAL.

Prior Authorization Information
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS)
This is NOT a covered service.

Commercial Members: PPO, and Indemnity
This is NOT a covered service.

Medicare Members: HMO Blue SM
This is NOT a covered service.

Medicare Members: PPO Blue SM
This is NOT a covered service.

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
There is no specific CPT code for this service.

Description
Congestive heart failure is a relatively common problem and frequently results in hospitalizations and readmissions. Ultrafiltration (also referred to as aquapheresis) is a technique being evaluated for removal of excess fluid from patients with volume overload and heart failure. It removes fluid from the blood by using pressure differentials with dialysis equipment or similar filtration devices.

Ultrafiltration may offer the potential for greater and more expeditious volume and sodium removal compared with conventional therapies. Ultrafiltration is generally used for those with decompensated heart failure whose fluid overload is unresponsive to medical management.

An example of an ultrafiltration device for decompensated heart failure is the Aquadex™ FlexFlow™ System from CHF Solutions. All ultrafiltration devices for decompensated heart failure are considered investigational regardless of the commercial name, the manufacturer, or FDA approval status.

Summary
The quality of the evidence on the use of ultrafiltration in patients with decompensated heart failure remains limited. The published clinical trials involve small numbers of patients and report short-term to intermediate outcomes. Ninety-day readmission appears to be reduced in the ultrafiltration group in one study, but otherwise no studies to date address long-term mortality or morbidity, or quality-of-life outcomes. Therefore, given the uncertain impact on health outcomes, this procedure is considered investigational.

Policy History

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/2014</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/2013</td>
<td>New references from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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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
21. McMurray JJ, Adamopoulos S, Anker SD et al. ESC Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic heart failure 2012: The Task Force for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Acute and Chronic Heart Failure 2012 of the European Society of Cardiology. Developed in collaboration with the Heart Failure Association (HFA) of the ESC. Eur Heart J 2012; 33(14):1787-847.