Medical Policy
Water-Induced Thermotherapy as a Treatment of Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy

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Policy Number: 646
BCBSA Reference Number: 2.01.49A

Related Policies
• Cryosurgical Ablation of the Prostate, #149

Policy
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members
Water-induced thermotherapy may be MEDICALLY NECESSARY as a treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy.

Prior Authorization Information
Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS)
No prior authorization is required

Commercial Members: PPO, and Indemnity
No prior authorization is required

Medicare Members: HMO BlueSM
No prior authorization is required

Medicare Members: PPO BlueSM
No prior authorization is 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
There is no specific CPT code for this service

Description
Over the past decade a variety of minimally invasive procedures have been investigated as alternatives to transurethral resection of the prostate, considered the gold standard treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH). These techniques are intended to induce necrosis in prostatic tissue using a variety of energy sources, i.e., various types of laser prostatectomy, radiofrequency needle ablation, and transurethral microwave therapy.

Water-induced thermotherapy consists of placement of an inflated balloon along the length of the prostate, followed by the circulation of heated water, which circulates through a catheter system. Water-induced thermotherapy is performed in a single, 45-minute outpatient treatment session without anesthesia. Patients typically require catheterization for at least one week due to post-procedure sloughing of prostatic tissue.

Summary
Regarding water-induced thermotherapy, the largest study was published by Muschter and colleagues. This prospective multicenter clinical trial enrolled 125 patients with BPH who underwent water-induced thermotherapy. The treatment was well tolerated; the results noted for water-induced thermotherapy are roughly comparable to those achieved with other minimally invasive techniques. Findings in more recent literature support the policy statement on water-induced thermotherapy as a treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy. Water-induced thermotherapy as a treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy may be considered 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


