DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF IDIOPATHIC ENVIRONMENTAL INTOLERANCE

Coverage for services, procedures, medical devices and drugs are dependent upon benefit eligibility as outlined in the member's specific benefit plan. This Medical Coverage Guideline must be read in its entirety to determine coverage eligibility, if any.

The section identified as “Description” defines or describes a service, procedure, medical device or drug and is in no way intended as a statement of medical necessity and/or coverage.

The section identified as “Criteria” defines criteria to determine whether a service, procedure, medical device or drug is considered medically necessary or experimental or investigational.

State or federal mandates, e.g., FEP program, may dictate that any drug, device or biological product approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may not be considered experimental or investigational and thus the drug, device or biological product may be assessed only on the basis of medical necessity.

Medical Coverage Guidelines are subject to change as new information becomes available.

For purposes of this Medical Coverage Guideline, the terms "experimental" and "investigational" are considered to be interchangeable.

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Description:

Idiopathic environmental intolerance is a term that reflects the uncertain nature of a condition and its relationship to chemical exposure. Individuals may describe recurrent, nonspecific symptoms that are believed to be provoked by exposure to chemical, biologic or physical agents. Symptoms may include fatigue, difficulty in concentrating, depressed mood, memory loss, weakness, dizziness, headaches, heat intolerance and arthralgia.

Common environmental exposures include perfumes and scented products, pesticides, domestic and industrial solvents, new carpets, car exhaust, gasoline and diesel fumes, urban air pollution, cigarette smoke, plastics and formaldehyde. Certain foods, food additives, drugs, electromagnetic fields and mercury in dental fillings have also been reported as triggering events.
DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF IDIOPATHIC ENVIRONMENTAL INTOLERANCE (cont.)

Description: (cont.)

Therapy may begin with an extended series of immunologic tests including a variety of provocation-neutralization tests. Proposed therapies include avoidance of exposure, either in the environment or in the diet. Intravenous immune globulin (IVIG) may be suggested or sublingual drops of “neutralizing” chemical and food extracts.

Idiopathic environmental intolerance may also be known as multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) and, formerly as clinical ecology. Disorders that may overlap into this illness category include chronic fatigue syndrome, sick building syndrome, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome and Gulf War syndrome.

Criteria:

For hair analysis to confirm the diagnosis of idiopathic environmental intolerance, see BCBSAZ Medical Coverage Guideline, “Hair Analysis”.

COVERAGE FOR IDIOPATHIC ENVIRONMENTAL INTOLERANCE AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE IS DEPENDENT UPON BENEFIT PLAN LANGUAGE. REFER TO MEMBER’S SPECIFIC BENEFIT PLAN BOOKLET TO VERIFY BENEFITS.

- If benefit coverage for environmental intolerance is available, testing to confirm the diagnosis of idiopathic environmental intolerance is considered experimental or investigational based upon:
  
  1. Insufficient scientific evidence to permit conclusions concerning the effect on health outcomes, and
  2. Insufficient evidence to support improvement of the net health outcome.

Tests include, but are not limited to:

  - Nutritional assessments, including intracellular analysis of micronutrients.
DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF IDIOPATHIC ENVIRONMENTAL INTOLERANCE (cont.)

Criteria: (cont.)

- If benefit coverage for environmental intolerance is available, treatment of idiopathic environmental intolerance is considered experimental or investigational based upon:
  1. Insufficient scientific evidence to permit conclusions concerning the effect on health outcomes, and
  2. Insufficient evidence to support improvement of the net health outcome.

  Treatments include, but are not limited to:
  - Avoidance therapy
  - Elimination diets
  - IVIG to boost the immune system
  - Neutralizing therapy of chemical and food extracts

Resources:

1. 20.01.01 BCBS Association Medical Policy Reference Manual. Diagnosis and Management of Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance (i.e., Multiple Chemical Sensitivities). Re-issue date 05/22/2014; issue date 12/01/1995.


DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF IDIOPATHIC ENVIRONMENTAL INTOLERANCE (cont.)

Resources: (cont.)


