



MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy

Whole Body Dual X-Ray Absorptiometry - DEXA - to Determine Body Composition

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Policy Number: 577

BCBSA Reference Number: 6.01.40

Related Policies

None

Policy

Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, and Indemnity Medicare HMO BlueSM and Medicare PPO BlueSM Members

Dual x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) body composition studies are [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 BlueSM

This is **NOT** a covered service.

Medicare Members: PPO BlueSM

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.

ICD-9 Diagnosis Codes

Investigational for all diagnoses.

Description

Using low dose x-rays of two different energy levels, whole body dual x-ray absorptiometry measures lean tissue mass and total and regional body fat as well as bone density.

Measurements of body composition have been used to study how lean body mass and body fat change during health and disease, and have provided a research tool to study the metabolic effects of aging, obesity, and various wasting conditions such as occurs with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or post-bariatric surgery. A variety of techniques has been researched, including most commonly, anthropomorphic measures, bioelectrical impedance, and dual x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scans. All of these techniques are based in part on assumptions regarding the distribution of different body compartments and their density, and all rely on formulas to convert the measured parameter into an estimate of body composition. Therefore, all techniques will introduce variation based on how the underlying assumptions and formulas apply to different populations of subjects, i.e., different age groups, ethnicities, or underlying conditions.

Summary

DEXA (dual x-ray absorptiometry) has emerged as a new reference standard for body composition studies, replacing underwater weighing. While DEXA scans have become a valued research tool, it is unclear how information regarding body composition could be used in the active medical management of the patient to improve health outcomes. Periodic literature searches have not identified any controlled studies in which DEXA body composition measurements were actively used in patient management, nor has the utility of DEXA been compared to the use of other simpler techniques of body composition assessment, i.e., bioelectrical impedance or skin-fold thickness, in a clinical setting. None of the studies reported data demonstrating the impact of body composition measurement on health outcomes. The technique is considered investigational.

Policy History

Date	Action
3/2014	New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.
11/2011-4/2012	Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements.
12/2011	New policy, effective 12/2011, describing ongoing non-coverage.

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

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