



**BlueCross
BlueShield
of Arizona**

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

MEDICAL COVERAGE GUIDELINES
SECTION: VISION

ORIGINAL EFFECTIVE DATE: 04/16/13
LAST REVIEW DATE: 03/05/14
LAST CRITERIA REVISION DATE:
ARCHIVE DATE:

TRANSPUPILLARY THERMOTHERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF CHOROIDAL NEOVASCULAR CONDITIONS

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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TRANSPUPILLARY THERMOTHERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF CHOROIDAL NEOVASCULAR CONDITIONS (cont.)

Description:

Low power laser heat is delivered for prolonged time through the pupil to the choroid and retinal pigment epithelium. It has been investigated as a treatment to prevent choroidal neovascularization secondary to age-related macular degeneration and other ocular conditions.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD):

Gradual painless loss of central vision due to a breakdown of a portion of the retina known as the macula.

The non-neovascular form (also known as dry, nonexudative, or atrophic) is more common and progresses slowly, characterized by the accumulation of small, yellowish deposits called drusen that form within the layers of the retina. Non-neovascular AMD may suddenly develop into neovascular AMD.

The neovascular form (also known as wet, exudative or disciform) is characterized by choroidal neovascularization, the proliferation of fine blood vessels at the back of the eye that begin to leak or exude fluid, causing hemorrhage, swelling and scar tissue which may result in permanent central vision loss within days or weeks.

Central Serous Chorioretinopathy:

A disease in which a serous detachment of the macula occurs due to leakage of fluid from the choriocapillaris through the retinal pigment epithelium. Choroidal neovascularization may occur as a secondary complication.

Choroidal Neovascularization (CNV):

The proliferative growth of abnormal new blood vessels, called neovascular membranes, originating from the choroid (between the retina and the sclera) that begin to leak or exude fluid, causing hemorrhage, swelling and scar tissue which can lead to rapid irreversible loss of vision.

Pathologic Myopia:

Abnormal elongation of the eye associated with severe near-sightedness. It can result in a progressive, severe loss of vision, frequently related to the development of CNV.

Presumed Ocular Histoplasmosis:

Characterized by tiny choroidal scars, peripapillary scarring and exudation or hemorrhage from choroidal lesions in or near the macula along with a positive skin test for histoplasmosis and miliary opacities of the lungs.

Other Choroidal Neovascular Conditions:

Other conditions include, but are not limited to, angioid streaks, uveitis, choroidal rupture or trauma and chorioretinal scars.



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TRANSPUPILLARY THERMOTHERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF CHOROIDAL NEOVASCULAR CONDITIONS (cont.)

Criteria:

- Transpupillary thermotherapy for treatment of choroidal neovascularization (CNV) secondary to ocular conditions is considered **experimental or investigational** based upon insufficient scientific evidence to permit conclusions concerning the effect on health outcomes.

Ocular conditions include, *but are not limited to*:

1. Age-related macular degeneration
2. Angioid streaks
3. Chronic central serous chorioretinopathy
4. Choroidal rupture or trauma
5. Chorioretinal scars
6. Idiopathic CNV
7. Pathologic myopia
8. Presumed ocular histoplasmosis
9. Uveitis

Resources:

Resources prior to 04/16/13 may be requested from the BCBSAZ Medical Policy and Technology Research Department.

1. 9.03.10 BCBS Association Medical Policy Reference Manual. Transpupillary Thermotherapy for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization. Re-issue date 02/13/2014, issue date 11/20/2001.