Medical Policy
Axial Lumbosacral Interbody Fusion

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Policy Number: 404
BCBSA Reference Number: 7.01.130
NCD/LCD: NA

Related Policies
• Interspinous Distraction Devices (Spacers), #584
• Total Facet Arthroplasty , #174
• Ultrasound Accelerated Fracture Healing Device, #497

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

Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion (axial LIF) is considered INVESTIGATIONAL.

Prior Authorization Information
Inpatient
• For services described in this policy, precertification/preauthorization IS REQUIRED for all products if the procedure is performed inpatient.

Outpatient
• For services described in this policy, see below for products where prior authorization might be required if the procedure is performed outpatient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)</th>
<th>This is not a covered service.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial PPO and Indemnity</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare HMO BlueSM</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicare PPO BlueSM</td>
<td>This is not a covered service.</td>
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</table>
CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD Codes

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.

The following codes are included below for informational purposes only; this is not an all-inclusive list.

The following CPT codes are considered investigational for Commercial Members: Managed Care (HMO and POS), PPO, Indemnity, Medicare HMO Blue and Medicare PPO Blue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22586</td>
<td>Arthrodesis, pre-sacral interbody technique, including disc space preparation, discectomy, with posterior instrumentation, with image guidance, includes bone graft when performed, L5-S1 interspace</td>
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Description

Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion (also called pre-sacral, trans-sacral or paracoccygeal interbody fusion) is a minimally invasive technique designed to provide anterior access to the L4-S1 disc spaces for interbody fusion, while minimizing damage to muscular, ligamentous, neural, and vascular structures. It is performed under fluoroscopic guidance.

The procedure for one level axial lumbosacral interbody fusion (axial LIF) is as follows (1): Under fluoroscopic monitoring, a blunt guide pin introducer is passed through a 15- to 20-mm incision lateral to the coccyx and advanced along the midline of the anterior surface of the sacrum. A guide pin is introduced and tapped into the sacrum. A series of graduated dilators are advanced over the guide pin, and a dilator sheath attached to the last dilator is left in place to serve as a working channel for the passage of instruments. A cannulated drill is passed over the guide pin into the L5-S1 disc space to rest on the inferior endplate of L5. It is followed by cutters alternating with tissue extractors, and the nucleus pulposus is debulked under fluoroscopic guidance. Next, bone graft material is injected to fill the disc space. The threaded rod is placed over the guide pin and advanced through the sacrum into L5. The implant is designed to distract the vertebral bodies and restore disc and neural foramen height.

Additional graft material is injected into the rod, where it enters into the disc space through holes in the axial rod. A rod plug is then inserted to fill the cannulation of the axial rod. Percutaneous placement of pedicle or facet screws may be used to provide supplemental fixation. An advantage of axial LIF is that it allows preservation of the annulus and all paraspinous soft tissue structures. However, there is an increased need for fluoroscopy and an inability to address intracanal pathology or visualize the discectomy procedure directly. Complications of the axial approach may include perforation of the bowel and injury to blood vessels and/or nerves.

Summary

The available published evidence on axial LIF consists of case series. This evidence is insufficient to evaluate whether axial LIF is as effective or as safe as other surgical approaches to lumbosacral interbody fusion, due to the variable natural history of the disorder and the subjective nature of the main outcomes. In addition, there are a relatively large number of adverse event reports in the MAUDE database for axial LIF, which raises the possibility of an increased risk of complications. Controlled trials are needed to better define the benefits and risks of this procedure compared to alternative treatment options. Due to limited evidence and concerns about the safety and efficacy of the axial approach, axial LIF is considered investigational.
Policy History

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/2019</td>
<td>Clarified coding information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2018</td>
<td>Clarified coding information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/2016</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2015</td>
<td>Added coding language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2014</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/2014</td>
<td>New references added from BCBSA National medical policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2012</td>
<td>Updated to add new CPT code 22586.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2012</td>
<td>Updated with New medical policy describing ongoing non-coverage. Information was transferred from medical policy 617, Minimally Invasive Lumbar Interbody Fusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2012</td>
<td>Reviewed at MPG – Neurology and Neurosurgery, no changes in coverage were made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/1/2011</td>
<td>New policy, effective 12/1/2011</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