



MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy

Diagnosis and Management of Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance or Clinical Ecology

Table of Contents

- [Policy: Commercial](#)
- [Policy: Medicare](#)
- [Authorization Information](#)
- [Coding Information](#)
- [Description](#)
- [Policy History](#)
- [Information Pertaining to All Policies](#)
- [References](#)

Policy Number: 264

BCBSA Reference Number: 2.01.01

Related Policies

- Fecal Analysis in the Diagnosis of Intestinal Dysbiosis, #[556](#)
- Intracellular Micronutrient Analysis, #[073](#)

Policy

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

Laboratory tests designed to affirm the diagnosis of idiopathic environmental intolerance is **INVESTIGATIONAL**.

Treatments for idiopathic environmental intolerance, including but not limited to IVIg, neutralizing therapy of chemical and food extracts, avoidance therapy, elimination diets, and oral nystatin (to treat Candida) are **INVESTIGATIONAL**.

Prior Authorization Information

Pre-service approval is required for all inpatient services for all products.

See below for situations where prior authorization may be required or may not be required for outpatient services.

Yes indicates that prior authorization is required.

No indicates that prior authorization is not required.

N/A indicates that this service is primarily performed in an inpatient setting.

Outpatient

Commercial Managed Care (HMO and POS)	This is not a covered service.
Commercial PPO and Indemnity	This is not a covered service.
Medicare HMO BlueSM	This is not a covered service.
Medicare 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.

Description

Idiopathic environmental intolerance is typically characterized by recurrent, nonspecific symptoms that the patient believes are provoked by low levels of exposure to chemical, biologic, or physical agents. The most 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. However, symptoms do not bear any relationship to established toxic effects of the specific chemical, and occur at concentrations far below those expected to elicit toxicity.

Reported symptoms are markedly variable but generally involve the central nervous system, respiratory and mucosal irritation, or gastrointestinal symptoms. In contrast to the frequently debilitating symptomatology, no specific and consistent abnormalities are noted on laboratory or other diagnostic testing. The variable nature of the reported symptoms and the lack of recognized pathologic abnormalities make it extremely difficult to establish objective diagnostic criteria for the condition, which further hinders research into both the causes and appropriate treatment.

An example of nutritional environmental intolerance testing includes the Functional Intracellular Analysis (FIA™) from SpectraCell labs that measure the intracellular levels of micronutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants in lymphocytes. All environmental tolerance testing is considered investigational regardless of the commercial name the manufacturer or FDA approval status.

Summary

There is a lack of clear diagnostic criteria for idiopathic environmental intolerance (also known as multiple chemical sensitivities) and a lack of evidence on the diagnostic accuracy of laboratory or other tests for this condition. Overall, studies using existing criteria have not found that subjects diagnosed with the condition can reliably distinguish between chemical exposure and placebo. Moreover, studies have not consistently found that low-level electromagnetic field exposure affects objective outcomes eg, heart rate or cognitive function. In addition, there is a lack of controlled studies to evaluate treatments for idiopathic environmental intolerance. Thus, all tests and treatments for this condition are considered investigational.

Policy History

Date	Action
7/2014	BCBSA National medical policy review. Wording in statement on treatment modified for clarification.
6/2013	New references from BCBSA National medical policy.
2/04/2013	BCBSA National medical policy review. No changes to policy statements; title revised.
11/2011- 4/2012	Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements.
3/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group – Allergy/Asthma/Immunology and ENT/Otolaryngology.

	No changes to policy statements.
9/01/2010	Medical Policy #264 created.

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](#)

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