



Lipedema Treatment

LOB(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medicare <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medicaid	State(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Idaho <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Montana <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oregon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Washington <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oregon <input type="checkbox"/> Washington
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Enterprise Policy

Clinical Guidelines are written when necessary to provide guidance to providers and members in order to outline and clarify coverage criteria in accordance with the terms of the Member's policy. This Clinical Guideline only applies to PacificSource Health Plans, PacificSource Community Health Plans, and PacificSource Community Solutions in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Because of the changing nature of medicine, this list is subject to revision and update without notice. This document is designed for informational purposes only and is not an authorization or contract. Coverage determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and subject to the terms, conditions, limitations, and exclusions of the Member's policy. Member policies differ in benefits and to the extent a conflict exists between the Clinical Guideline and the Member's policy, the Member's policy language shall control. Clinical Guidelines do not constitute medical advice nor guarantee coverage.

Background

Lipedema is a painful, chronic, incurable disease that almost exclusively affects women after puberty and is characterized by abnormal bilateral enlargement of subcutaneous adipose tissue of the legs or arms but with normal hands and feet. The cause of lipedema is unknown, but evidence suggests it may be genetic or due to hormonal changes. The lymphatic system is not usually impacted by lipedema; however, in severe cases, the lymphatic system can be overloaded, and secondary lymphedema can develop. In addition, advanced cases of lipedema can affect the venous system. Symptoms include painful sensation in the involved limbs, impaired mobility and disfigurement with lumps under the skin.

There are currently four reported stages of lipedema: Stage 1 involves an even skin surface with an enlarged hypodermis; Stage 2 involves an uneven skin pattern with the development of a nodular or mass-like appearance of subcutaneous fat, lipomas, and/or angiolipomas; Stage 3 involves large growths of nodular fat causing severe contour deformity of the thighs and around the knee; and Stage 4 involves the presence of lipolymphedema, in which the lymphatic system is impaired and lymph fluid collects, congesting the tissue.

Treatment for lipedema is focused on managing the symptoms by reducing volume, inflammation and pain, restoring or maintaining mobility and slowing disease progression. First line treatment is conservative, including complex decongestive therapy (CDT). CDT combines several approaches including manual lymph drainage, compression therapy, and physical mobilization. When symptoms persist and worsen, surgical options are considered.

Lipectomy is a surgical technique that involves the invasive surgical removal of excess subcutaneous adipose tissue that accumulates as a result of lipedema. Excisional lipectomy has been used to treat

advanced cases with large, localized deposits of lipedematous tissue, serious mechanical difficulties, valgus deformity of the knees, or the inability to walk.

Liposuction is a surgical procedure performed to recontour the individual's body by removing excess fat deposits that have been resistant to reduction by diet or exercise. There are multiple techniques for performing liposuction and these procedures have been used successfully on many body locations, but do not remove large quantities of fat.

Criteria

Commercial

Prior authorization is required.

A. Lipectomy/Liposuction

PacificSource may consider lipectomy and/or liposuction for the treatment of lipedema to be medically necessary when **ALL** of the following criteria are met:

1. There is a significant functional impairment (e.g., difficulty performing activities of daily living) or medical complication (i.e., recurrent cellulitis)
2. When lipectomy and/or liposuction is reasonably expected to improve the functional impairment
3. Condition has failed to respond to at least 3 consecutive months of medical management (e.g., conservative treatment with compression garments, manual lymph drainage).

Medicaid

PacificSource Community Solutions follows Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) 410-120-1200 and 410-141-3820 through 3830 for coverage of Lipedema Treatment.

Medicare

PacificSource Medicare follows CMS guidelines and criteria. In the absence of CMS criteria, evidence-based criteria, and internal policy guidelines, requests are reviewed on an individual basis for determination of coverage and medical necessity.

Coding Information

The following list of codes are for informational purposes only and may not be all-inclusive. Deleted codes and codes which are not effective at the time the service is rendered may not be eligible for reimbursement.

15832 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); thigh

15833 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); leg

- 15834 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); hip
- 15835 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); buttock
- 15836 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); arm
- 15837 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); forearm or hand
- 15839 Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy), other area
- 15877 Suction assisted lipectomy; trunk
- 15878 Suction assisted lipectomy; upper extremity
- 15879 Suction assisted lipectomy; lower extremity

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HCPCS® codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Definitions

Cellulitis: An infection that spreads to deep tissues of the skin and muscle, which may cause warmth, tenderness, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, and blisters.

Functional/Physical Impairment: An impairment which causes deviation from the normal function of a tissue or organ resulting in a significantly limited, impaired, or delayed capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities.

Lipedema: A chronic disease affecting almost exclusively women after puberty, characterized by painful abnormal enlargement of subcutaneous adipose tissue of the arms and legs.

Lipectomy: the surgical removal of fatty tissue.

Liposuction: a technique in surgery for removing excess fat from under the skin by suction.

References

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Appendix

Policy Number:

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Policy type: Enterprise

Author(s):

Depts: Health Services

Applicable regulation(s): OARs 410-120-1200 and 410-141-3820 through 3830

Commercial Ops: 12/2022

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