



MASSACHUSETTS

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Medical Policy

Whole-Body Computed Tomography Scan as a Screening Test

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Policy Number: 447

BCBSA Reference Number: 6.01.41A (For Plan internal use only)

Related Policies

None

Policy

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

Whole-body computed tomography scans as a screening test 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.

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

CPT Codes / HCPCS Codes / ICD 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

This policy addresses whole-body computed tomography (CT) scanning or whole-body CT screening as a potential preventive measure for individuals who have no signs or symptoms of disease.

Whole-body computed tomography (CT) scans, which encompass the body from the neck to the pelvis, have been proposed as a general screening test for diseases of the thyroid (i.e., cancer), lungs (i.e., lung cancer), heart (i.e., cardiovascular disease [CVD]), abdominal, and pelvic organs (cancer, CVD). Often the test is marketed directly to the patient and is offered through mobile CT scanners that travel from community to community.

Summary

Evidence has not changed substantially since a 2003 review that concluded “no published studies demonstrate that these procedures reduce morbidity or mortality when used to screen healthy, asymptomatic patients.” Moreover, the radiation dose of the CT scan itself could lead to an excess lifetime risk of fatal cancer, and that radiation dose and associated risk should be included as fundamental parameters for investigating the outcomes of a CT-based screening program. Evidence reviewed in a 2010 report from the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation indicates that whole-body CT screening uses 500 to 1,000 times the radiation levels of a routine chest x-ray, without any demonstrated positive effects on life expectancy. The current literature does not support an improvement in health outcomes with whole-body CT screening. Therefore, this procedure is considered investigational.

Policy History

Date	Action
5/2024	Clarified coding information
11/2022	Annual policy review. Policy updated with literature review through October 2022. No references added. Policy statements unchanged.
1/2021	Medicare information removed. See MP #132 Medicare Advantage Management for local coverage determination and national coverage determination reference.
2/2020	Policy updated with literature review through February 1, 2020, no references added. Policy statements unchanged.
7/2014	Updated Coding section with ICD10 procedure and diagnosis codes, effective 10/2015.
6/2013	Annual policy review. New references added.
11/2011-4/2012	Medical policy ICD 10 remediation: Formatting, editing and coding updates. No changes to policy statements.
1/2012	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
10/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group -Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Organ Transplantation. No changes to policy statements.
9/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Urology and Obstetrics/Gynecology. No changes to policy statements.
7/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
6/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Orthopedics, Rehabilitation Medicine and Rheumatology. No changes to policy statements.
5/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements.
4/2011	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Cardiology and Pulmonology. No changes to policy statements.
11/2010	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group -Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Organ Transplantation. No changes to policy statements.

10/2010	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Urology and Obstetrics/Gynecology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2010	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
7/2010	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
4/2010	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Cardiology and Pulmonology. No changes to policy statements.
11/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group -Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Organ Transplantation. No changes to policy statements.
10/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Urology and Obstetrics/Gynecology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
7/2009	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
5/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements.
4/2009	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Cardiology and Pulmonology. No changes to policy statements.
11/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group -Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Organ Transplantation. No changes to policy statements.
10/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Urology and Obstetrics/Gynecology. No changes to policy statements.
10/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2008	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
5/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements.
5/2008	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
4/2008	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Cardiology and Pulmonology. No changes to policy statements.
1/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Neurology and Neurosurgery. No changes to policy statements.
11/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group -Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Organ Transplantation. No changes to policy statements.
10/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Urology and Obstetrics/Gynecology. No changes to policy statements.
9/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Hematology and Oncology. No changes to policy statements.
7/2007	Annual policy review. Changes to policy statements.
5/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Pediatrics and Endocrinology. No changes to policy statements.
4/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Cardiology and Pulmonology. No changes to policy statements.
4/2007	Annual policy review. No changes to policy statements.
3/2007	Reviewed - Medical Policy Group - Allergy and ENT/Otolaryngology. No changes to policy statements.

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

1. Obuchowski NA, Holden D, Modic MT et al. Total-body screening: preliminary results of a pilot randomized controlled trial. *J Am Coll Radiol* 2007; 4(9-Jan):604-11.
2. Obuchowski N, Modic MT. Total body screening: predicting actionable findings. *Acad Radio* 2006; 13(4):480-5.
3. Furtado CD, Aguirre DA, Sirlin CB et al. Whole-body CT screening: spectrum of findings and recommendations in 1192 patients. *Radiology* 2005; 237(2):385-94.
4. Dixon GD. Computed tomography for screening purposes: a review of the literature--2003. *Mo Med* 2003; 100(2):140-4.
5. Buls N, de Mey J, Covens P et al. Health screening with CT: prospective assessment of radiation dose and associated detriment. *JBR-BTR* 2005; 88(1):12-16.
6. Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. Myth: whole-body screening is an effective way to detect hidden cancers. *J Health Serv Res Policy* 2010; 15(2-Jan):118-9.
7. American College of Radiology. ACR Statement on Whole Body CT Screening. 2002. Available online at: <http://www.acr.org/About-Us/Media-Center/Position-Statements/Position-Statements-Folder/ACR-Statement-on-Whole-Body-CT-Screening>. Last accessed March, 2013.
8. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Whole body scanning using computed tomography. Last update 04/06/2010. Available online at: <http://www.fda.gov/Radiation-EmittingProducts/RadiationEmittingProductsandProcedures/MedicalImaging/MedicalX-Rays/ucm115340.htm>. Last accessed March, 2013.