

CHAPTER 8 SECTION 2.1

PODIATRY

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I. DESCRIPTION

Podiatry is the specialized field that deals with the study and care of the foot, including its anatomy, pathology, medical and surgical treatment (including the ankle and lower extremity in some states).

II. POLICY

Podiatric services are covered if considered medically necessary, effective, and reasonable treatment for the patient's diagnosis and condition; if performed by a licensed podiatrist (must be licensed in the state in which practicing) and practicing within the scope of the state license; and if the services and the patient's condition require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified provider of podiatric services because of their complexity and sophistication.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Routine Foot Care. Removal of corns, calluses, trimming of toenails, and other routine podiatry services are excluded, unless the patient has a diagnosed systemic medical disease affecting the lower limbs. Routine foot care services are considered medically necessary for peripheral vascular disease, metabolic or neurological disease and may be covered.

B. Toenail Surgery (11730-11765). Partial or total removal of a toenail by surgical or chemical means is covered for distorted nails and infections to include onychomycosis (mycotic nails), onychia (club nails), onychogryphosis (deformed nails) or onychocryptosis (ingrown toenail).

C. Shoe Inserts. Shoe inserts, orthopedic shoes (except when attached to a brace), arch supports and other supportive devices for the feet, are excluded by law from coverage regardless of the diagnosis. For more on orthotics, see [Chapter 7, Section 5.3](#).

D. Injections and Aspiration of Joints. Payment for injections and aspiration of joints is to be made under the policy found in [Chapter 3, Section 3.2](#), under the subject of "Musculoskeletal System".

E. Non-invasive vascular diagnostic studies.

1. Cerebrovascular arterial studies (codes 93875-93888).

These studies, in conjunction with podiatry services, are not medically appropriate and are not covered. For more on Cerebrovascular arterial studies, see [Chapter 1, Section 19.1](#).

2. Other Vascular Studies.

a. Bilateral comparison studies are not medically necessary when unilateral surgery is performed.

b. Preoperative studies without medical indication are not medically necessary.

c. The arterial study alone provides sufficient information for the treating podiatrist. Multiple studies on the same date of service are not generally considered medically necessary and should be reviewed to determine appropriateness.

d. Preoperative non-invasive arterial and venous vascular studies may be covered if the patient has non-palpable pulses and exhibits three or more of the following symptoms: decreased hair growth in the extremity; nail changes; abnormal skin texture; abnormal skin color/temperature; and/or pigmentation change.

e. Preoperative non-invasive arterial and venous vascular studies are covered to evaluate the following conditions:

- (1) Diabetes mellitus.
- (2) Buerger's disease.
- (3) Chronic hypertension.
- (4) Arteriosclerosis obliterans.
- (5) Non-traumatic amputation of the foot or any part thereof.
- (6) Gangrene.
- (7) Intermittent claudication or ischemic type pain.
- (8) Peripheral vascular disease.

F. Laboratory Services. Laboratory procedures are covered only when medically necessary and related specifically to the diagnosis. For more on reimbursement of laboratory services, see [Chapter 13, Section 3.4](#).

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