

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Issue Date: July 3, 1997

Authority: [32 CFR 199.4\(c\)\(3\)\(x\)](#)

I. PROCEDURE CODES

97003 - 97004

II. DESCRIPTION

Occupational therapy is the medically prescribed use of purposeful activity or interventions designed to promote health, prevent injury or disability, and which develop, improve, sustain, or restore functions which have been lost or reduced as a result of injury, illness, cognitive impairment, psychosocial dysfunction, mental illness, or developmental, learning or physical disability(ies), to the highest possible level for independent functioning.

III. POLICY

Benefits are payable for inpatient and outpatient occupational therapy services which meet all of the following criteria:

A. The services must be provided by a TRICARE authorized physician or Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR).

B. The services must be prescribed and supervised by a physician.

C. The prescribing physician must follow the policy outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 2.1](#).

D. **There must be a reasonable expectation that the service will produce significant improvement in the patient's condition in a reasonable and generally predictable period of time or that the services are necessary to the establishment of a safe and effective maintenance program required in connection with a specific medical condition.**

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. The following occupational therapy services are not covered:

1. Vocational and prevocational assessment and training relating to specific employment opportunities, work skills and work settings.

2. General exercise programs, even if recommended by a physician or other authorized provider acting within the scope of his/her license.
3. Separate charges for instruction of the patient and family in therapy procedures.
4. Repetitive exercise to improve gait, maintain strength and endurance, and assisted walking such as that provided in support of feeble or unstable patients.
5. Range of motion and passive exercises which are not related to restoration of a specific loss of function, but are useful in maintaining range of motion in paralyzed extremities.
6. Gait analysis (also known as a walk study evaluation or electrodynogram) is considered unproven and is not covered.

B. Occupational therapists are not authorized to bill using Evaluation and Management (E & M) codes listed in the Physicians' Current Procedural Terminology.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

Occupational therapy services provided under the Basic Program by individual professional providers is effective October 28, 1997.

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