

# Lower Extremity Endovascular Procedures (for Ohio Only)

**Policy Number:** CS166OH.A  
**Effective Date:** December 1, 2023

[Instructions for Use](#)

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**Related Policies**

- [Pneumatic Compression Devices \(for Ohio Only\)](#)
- [Surgical and Ablative Procedures for Venous Insufficiency and Varicose Veins \(for Ohio Only\)](#)

## Application

This Medical Policy only applies to the state of Ohio. Any requests for services that are stated as unproven or services for which there is a coverage or quantity limit will be evaluated for medical necessity using Ohio Administrative Code 5160-1-01.

## Coverage Rationale

**Note:** This policy does not apply to upper extremities.

**Endovascular revascularization procedures (e.g., stents, angioplasty, and/or atherectomy) for treating lower extremity ischemia are proven and medically necessary in certain circumstances.** For medical necessity clinical coverage criteria, refer to the InterQual® CP: Procedures, Endovascular Intervention, Peripheral Artery.

Click [here](#) to view the InterQual® criteria.

**Due to insufficient evidence of efficacy, endovascular revascularization procedures (e.g., stents, angioplasty, and/or atherectomy) for treating lower extremity ischemia are unproven and not medically necessary in the following circumstances:**

- Interventions performed for non-limb-threatening infrapopliteal (e.g., anterior tibial, posterior tibial or peroneal) artery disease
- Individual is asymptomatic
- To prevent the progression of Claudication to CLTI
- Treatment of a nonviable limb

## Definitions

**Chronic Limb-Threatening Ischemia (CLTI):** A condition characterized by chronic ( $\geq 2$  weeks) ischemic rest pain, nonhealing wound/ulcers or gangrene in one or both legs attributable to arterial occlusive disease (Gerhard-Herman et al., 2017). Also referred to as critical limb ischemia (CLI).

**Claudication:** Fatigue, discomfort, cramping or pain of vascular origin in the muscles of the lower extremities that is consistently induced by exercise and consistently relieved by rest (within 10 min) (Gerhard-Herman et al., 2017).

## Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by federal, state, or contractual requirements and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

CPT Code	Description
0238T	Transluminal peripheral atherectomy, open or percutaneous, including radiological supervision and interpretation; iliac artery, each vessel
0505T	Endovenous femoral-popliteal arterial revascularization, with transcatheter placement of intravascular stent graft(s) and closure by any method, including percutaneous or open vascular access, ultrasound guidance for vascular access when performed, all catheterization(s) and intraprocedural roadmapping and imaging guidance necessary to complete the intervention, all associated radiological supervision and interpretation, when performed, with crossing of the occlusive lesion in an extraluminal fashion
37220	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, iliac artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with transluminal angioplasty
37221	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, iliac artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s), includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37222	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, iliac artery, each additional ipsilateral iliac vessel; with transluminal angioplasty (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
37223	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, iliac artery, each additional ipsilateral iliac vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s), includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
37224	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, femoral, popliteal artery(s), unilateral; with transluminal angioplasty
37225	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, femoral, popliteal artery(s), unilateral; with atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37226	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, femoral, popliteal artery(s), unilateral; with transluminal stent placement(s), includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37227	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, femoral, popliteal artery(s), unilateral; with transluminal stent placement(s) and atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37228	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial, peroneal artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with transluminal angioplasty
37229	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial, peroneal artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37230	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial, peroneal artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s), includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed

CPT Code	Description
37231	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial, peroneal artery, unilateral, initial vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s) and atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed
37232	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial/peroneal artery, unilateral, each additional vessel; with transluminal angioplasty (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
37233	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial/peroneal artery, unilateral, each additional vessel; with atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
37234	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial/peroneal artery, unilateral, each additional vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s), includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
37235	Revascularization, endovascular, open or percutaneous, tibial/peroneal artery, unilateral, each additional vessel; with transluminal stent placement(s) and atherectomy, includes angioplasty within the same vessel, when performed (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

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## Description of Services

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a narrowing of vessels due to atherosclerosis that limits blood flow to the limbs. PAD most commonly affects arteries in the legs. While many people with PAD do not have any symptoms, some will have leg pain, numbness or cramping during exercise that is relieved by rest (Claudication). Risk factors include age, smoking, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

PAD is associated with an increased risk of heart attack, stroke and when left untreated, can lead to CLTI. Treatment options include lifestyle changes, medications, endovascular techniques, and surgery. Endovascular techniques to treat Claudication and CLTI include balloon dilation (angioplasty), stents, endovenous stent grafts, and atherectomy. The technique chosen for endovascular treatment depends on many factors including lesion characteristics such as anatomic location, lesion length and degree of calcification (Gerhard-Herman et al., 2017; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website).

## Clinical Evidence

The Best Endovascular Versus Best Surgical Therapy for Patients With Critical Limb Ischemia (BEST-CLI) Trial was a prospective, open label, multicenter, randomized controlled, multidisciplinary, superiority trial comparing treatment efficacy, functional outcomes, and quality of life in patients undergoing endovascular or open surgical revascularization. Clinical sites in the United States and internationally enrolled 1830 patients with chronic limb-threatening ischemia (CLTI) and infrainguinal PAD who were candidates for both treatment options. Patients were enrolled into one of two parallel trial cohorts. Patients with suitable single segment of great saphenous vein available for potential bypass were randomized within Cohort 1 (n = 1620), while patients without were randomized within Cohort 2 (n = 480). The primary outcome was a composite of a major adverse limb event (amputation above the ankle or a major limb reintervention) or death from any cause. In Cohort 1, after a median follow-up of 2.7 years, the incidence of a major adverse limb event or death was significantly lower in the surgical group than in the endovascular group. In Cohort 2, after a median follow-up of 1.6 years, the outcomes in the two groups were similar. The incidence of adverse events was similar in the two groups. Because investigators were allowed to use their preferred techniques, there was a potential for selection and operator bias. Also, due to funding issues, the follow-up was longer in Cohort 1 than Cohort 2 (Farber et al., 2022). The study was funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

A Cochrane systematic review by Fakhry et al. (2018) assessed the effectiveness of endovascular revascularization compared with no specific therapy for intermittent claudication or compared with a conservative therapy option such as supervised exercise or drug therapy. The review included ten studies with a total of 1087 participants. The results showed that endovascular revascularization and supervised exercise are comparable treatment options in improving walking distances and quality of life in individuals with intermittent claudication. Combination therapy (endovascular revascularization with either supervised exercise or drug therapy) seemed to result in greater improvements than those seen with supervised exercise or

drug therapy alone. (The ERASE trial by Fakhry et al., 2015 and the CLEVER trial by Murphy et al., 2015, which were previously cited in this policy, are included in this systematic review.)

Malgor et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review to evaluate the efficacy of three treatment strategies for individuals with claudication. Primary outcome measures included mortality, amputation, walking distance, quality of life, patency, and measures of blood flow (ABI). The review included eight systematic reviews and 12 trials enrolling 1548 patients. Compared with medical management, each of the three treatments (surgery, endovascular therapy, and exercise therapy) was associated with improved walking distance, claudication symptoms and quality of life. Evidence supporting superiority of one of the three approaches was limited. However, blood flow parameters improved faster and better with both forms of revascularization compared with exercise or medical management. Compared with endovascular therapy, open surgery may be associated with longer length of hospital stay and higher complication rates but resulted in more durable patency (moderate-quality evidence). (The CLEVER trial by Murphy et al., 2012, which was previously cited in this policy, is included in this systematic review.)

Vemulapalli et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review and a network meta-analysis to evaluate the comparative effectiveness of medical therapy, supervised exercise training, endovascular intervention, and surgical revascularization in patients with claudication. Outcomes assessed included walking distance, claudication distance, all-cause mortality, and quality of life. Thirty-five studies (n = 7475) were included in the analysis. A meta-analysis of 16 studies suggested that, compared with usual care, maximal walking measures were improved to a greater extent with supervised exercise than with medical therapy or endovascular intervention. A meta-analysis of 12 studies demonstrated that exercise training and endovascular intervention, but not cilostazol, improved initial claudication measures compared with usual care. A meta-analysis of 13 studies suggested that although all treatment modalities were superior to usual care, there was no significant difference between modalities in respect to quality of life. The authors noted that heterogeneity in functional endpoints, single-arm observational study design and poor subgroup reporting significantly limit comparative effectiveness analysis in PAD. Further studies with attention to study design, standardized efficacy and safety endpoints, and appropriate subgroup reporting are needed. (The multicenter CLEVER trial by Murphy et al., 2012, which was previously cited in this policy, is included in this systematic review.)

## Clinical Practice Guidelines

### ***American College of Cardiology (ACC)/American Heart Association (AHA)/Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI)/Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR)/Society for Vascular Medicine (SVM)***

In a multi-society report, Bailey et al. (2019) published appropriate use criteria for peripheral artery interventions. The panel recommends that patients with PAD and intermittent claudication should first be treated with guideline-directed medical therapy and structured exercise. Revascularization should be considered only in patients who continue to have lifestyle-limiting claudication despite these noninvasive approaches. In situations where medical therapy is insufficient, the selection of surgical or endovascular revascularization depends on several factors including patient risk level and lesion characteristics, such as anatomic location, length and presence of stenosis or occlusion. The criteria indicate that atherectomy of the iliac artery is rarely appropriate in all clinical scenarios. This rating is due to an absence of data supporting the use of this technology compared with balloon angioplasty and stenting. For patients with CLTI, both endovascular or surgical revascularization procedures are considered appropriate and critical for the reduction of high morbidity and mortality rates associated with limb loss and cardiovascular events.

### ***American Heart Association (AHA)/American College of Cardiology (ACC)***

AHA/ACC guidelines for the diagnosis and management of patients with lower extremity PAD make the following recommendations for surgical and endovascular revascularization procedures (Gerhard-Herman et al., 2017).

## Claudication

- Revascularization is a reasonable treatment option for the patient with lifestyle-limiting claudication with an inadequate response to guideline-directed management and therapy
- Endovascular procedures are effective as a revascularization option for patients with lifestyle-limiting claudication and hemodynamically significant aortoiliac occlusive disease
- Endovascular procedures are reasonable as a revascularization option for patients with lifestyle-limiting claudication and hemodynamically significant femoropopliteal disease

- The usefulness of endovascular procedures as a revascularization option for patients with claudication due to isolated infrapopliteal artery disease is unknown
- Endovascular procedures should not be performed in patients with PAD solely to prevent progression to CLTI

## CLTI

- In patients with CLTI, revascularization should be performed when possible to minimize tissue loss
- An evaluation for revascularization options should be performed by an interdisciplinary care team before amputation in the patient with CLTI
- Endovascular procedures are recommended to establish in-line blood flow to the foot in patients with nonhealing wounds or gangrene
- A staged approach to endovascular procedures is reasonable in patients with ischemic rest pain
- Evaluation of lesion characteristics can be useful in selecting the endovascular approach for CLTI

### *International Working Group on the Diabetic Foot (IWGDF)*

IWGDF guidelines on the prevention and management of diabetic foot disease state that in patients with either an ankle pressure < 50mm Hg or an ABI < 0.5, consider urgent vascular imaging and, when findings suggest it is appropriate, revascularization. Also consider revascularization if the toe pressure is < 30 mmHg or TcPO<sub>2</sub> is < 25 mmHg. Clinicians might consider revascularization at higher pressure levels in patients with extensive tissue loss or infection (Schaper et al., 2020).

### *National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)*

A National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline offers recommendations on the management of PAD (NICE, 2012; updated 2020).

### *Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS)*

SVS guidelines provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for the evaluation and management of CLTI. Vein bypass may be preferred for average-risk patients with advanced limb threat and high complexity disease, while those with less complex anatomy, intermediate severity limb threat or high patient risk may be favored for endovascular intervention. All patients with CLTI should be afforded best medical therapy including the use of antithrombotic, lipid-lowering, antihypertensive and glycemic control agents, as well as counseling on smoking cessation, diet, exercise, and preventive foot care (Conte et al., 2019).

Separate SVS guidelines provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for the evaluation and management of asymptomatic disease and intermittent claudication. Emphasis is placed on risk factor modification, medical therapies, and broader use of exercise programs to improve cardiovascular health and functional performance. Revascularization for intermittent claudication is an appropriate therapy for selected patients with disabling symptoms, after a careful risk-benefit analysis. Treatment should be individualized based on comorbid conditions, degree of functional impairment and anatomic factors. Invasive treatments for intermittent claudication should provide predictable functional improvements with reasonable durability. A minimum threshold of a >50% likelihood of sustained efficacy for at least 2 years is suggested as a benchmark. Endovascular approaches are favored for most candidates with aortoiliac disease and for selected patients with femoropopliteal disease in whom anatomic durability is expected to meet this minimum threshold. Conversely, caution is warranted in the use of interventions for intermittent claudication in anatomic settings where durability is limited (extensive calcification, small-caliber arteries, diffuse infrainguinal disease, poor runoff). Surgical bypass may be a preferred strategy in good-risk patients with these disease patterns or in those with prior endovascular failures. Common femoral artery disease should be treated surgically, and the saphenous vein is the preferred conduit for infrainguinal bypass grafting. Patients who undergo invasive treatments for intermittent claudication should be monitored regularly in a surveillance program to record subjective improvements, assess risk factors, optimize compliance with cardioprotective medications and monitor hemodynamic and patency status (Conte et al., 2015).

## **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

This section is to be used for informational purposes only. FDA approval alone is not a basis for coverage.

The FDA has approved several stents and stent systems for the treatment of PAD of the lower extremities. Refer to the following website (use product codes NIO and NIP) for more information:

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfPMA/pma.cfm>. (Accessed January 27, 2023)

The FDA has approved several catheter systems used for the treatment of PAD of the lower extremities. Refer to the following website (use product code DQY) for more information: <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfPMN/pmn.cfm>. (Accessed January 27, 2023)

In June 2020, the DETOUR system (Endologix) received FDA designation as a [Breakthrough Device](#) and is currently undergoing clinical trials to support a Premarket Approval (PMA) application. The system consists of the TORUS stent graft and the PQ Crossing Device.

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## Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
12/01/2023	<p><b>Title Change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously titled <i>Lower Extremity Invasive Diagnostic and Endovascular Procedures (for Ohio Only)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added language to indicate any requests for services that are stated as unproven or services for which there is a coverage or quantity limit will be evaluated for medical necessity using Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 5160-1-01</li> </ul> <p><b>Coverage Rationale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed language (and corresponding criteria) indicating lower extremity vascular angiography is proven and medically necessary for evaluating arterial disease, aneurysms, perivascular masses, and trauma related injuries of the lower extremity under certain circumstances</li> <li>Replaced language indicating “endovascular revascularization procedures (e.g., stents, angioplasty and/or atherectomy) for treating lower extremity ischemia are proven and medically necessary <i>in individuals who meet the [listed] indication-specific criteria</i>” with “endovascular revascularization procedures (e.g., stents, angioplasty and/or atherectomy) for treating lower extremity ischemia are proven and medically necessary <i>in certain circumstances</i>”</li> <li>Replaced medical necessity clinical coverage criteria with instruction to refer to the InterQual® CP: Procedures, Endovascular Intervention, Peripheral Artery</li> <li>Revised list of unproven and not medically necessary indications; replaced “<i>claudication due to isolated</i> infrapopliteal (e.g., anterior tibial, posterior tibial or peroneal) artery disease” with “<i>interventions performed for non-limb-threatening</i> infrapopliteal (e.g., anterior tibial, posterior tibial or peroneal) artery disease”</li> </ul> <p><b>Definitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed definition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ankle-Brachial Index (ABI)</li> <li>Structured Exercise Program</li> <li>Supervised Exercise Program</li> <li>Toe-Brachial Index (TBI)</li> <li>Transcutaneous Oxygen Pressure (TcPO<sub>2</sub>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Applicable Codes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added CPT codes 0238T and 0505T</li> <li>Removed CPT codes 75710 and 75716</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated <i>Description of Services, Clinical Evidence, FDA, and References</i> sections to reflect the most current information</li> <li>Archived previous policy version CS166OH.G - P</li> </ul>

## Instructions for Use

This Medical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the federal, state (Ohio Administrative Code [OAC]), or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage must be referenced as the terms of the federal, state (OAC), or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage may differ from the standard benefit plan. In the event of a conflict, the federal, state (OAC), or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage govern. Before using this policy, please check the federal, state (OAC), or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage.

UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Medical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

UnitedHealthcare uses InterQual® for the primary medical/surgical criteria, and the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) for substance use, in administering health benefits. If InterQual® does not have applicable criteria, UnitedHealthcare may also use UnitedHealthcare Medical Policies, Coverage Determination Guidelines, and/or Utilization Review Guidelines that have been approved by the Ohio Department for Medicaid Services. The UnitedHealthcare Medical Policies, Coverage Determination Guidelines, and Utilization Review Guidelines are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.