Coverage Summary

Positron Emission Tomography (PET)/Combined PET-CT (Computed Tomography)

Policy Number: P-003 | Products: UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Plans | Original Approval Date: 04/02/2007
Approved by: UnitedHealthcare Medicare Benefit Interpretation Committee | Last Review Date: 11/20/2017
Related Medicare Advantage Policy Guideline: Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan (Including NCDs 220.6-220.6.20)

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Coverage Statement: PET (FDG) and/or combined PET-CT scans are covered when determined to be medically necessary and specific criteria are met.

Guidelines/Notes:

1. Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
FDG (2-[F18] fluoro-2-deoxy-D-glucose) Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is a minimally-invasive diagnostic imaging procedure used to evaluate glucose metabolism in normal tissue as well as in diseased tissues in conditions such as cancer, ischemic heart disease, and some neurologic disorders. FDG is an injected radionuclide (or radiopharmaceutical) that emits subatomic particles, known as positrons, as it decays. FDG PET uses a positron camera (tomograph) to measure the decay of FDG. The rate of FDG decay provides biochemical information on glucose metabolism in the tissue being studied. As malignancies can cause abnormalities of metabolism and blood flow, FDG PET evaluation may indicate the probable presence or absence of a malignancy based upon observed differences in biologic activity compared to adjacent tissues.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) was asked by the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR) to reconsider section 220.6 of the National Coverage Determinations (NCD) Manual to end the prospective data collection requirements under Coverage with Evidence Development (CED) across all oncologic indications of FDG PET imaging. The CMS received public input indicating that the current coverage framework of prospective data collection under CED be ended for all oncologic uses of FDG PET imaging.

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is covered for specific indications when coverage criteria are met. Refer to the following National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) for specific coverage criteria:

a. **NCD for Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) for Oncologic Conditions (220.6.17)**
   (Accessed November 13, 2017)

1) **Framework**

   **Effective for claims with dates of service on and after June 11, 2013,** CMS adopted a coverage framework that ends the prospective data collection requirements by the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR) under coverage with evidence development (CED) for all oncologic uses of FDG PET imaging. CMS is making this change for all NCDs that address coverage of FDG PET for oncologic uses addressed in this decision. This decision does not change coverage for any use of PET imaging using radiopharmaceuticals NaF-18 (fluorine-18 labeled sodium fluoride), ammonia N-13, or rubidium-82 (Rb-82).

2) **Initial Anti-Tumor Treatment Strategy**

   CMS continues to believe that the evidence is adequate to determine that the results of FDG PET imaging are useful in determining the appropriate initial treatment strategy for beneficiaries with suspected cancer and improve health outcomes and thus are reasonable and necessary under §1862(a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act (the Act).

   Therefore, CMS continues to nationally cover one FDG PET study for beneficiaries who have cancers that are biopsy proven or strongly suspected based on other diagnostic testing when the beneficiary’s treating physician determines that the FDG PET study is needed to determine the location and/or extent of the tumor for the following therapeutic purposes related to the initial anti-tumor treatment strategy:

   - To determine whether or not the beneficiary is an appropriate candidate for an invasive diagnostic or therapeutic procedure; or
   - To determine the optimal anatomic location for an invasive procedure; or
   - To determine the anatomic extent of tumor when the recommended anti-tumor treatment reasonably depends on the extent of the tumor.
See Attachment A - National FDG PET Coverage for Oncologic Conditions for the summary of the national FDG PET coverage for oncologic conditions effective June 11, 2013.

**a) Initial Anti-Tumor Treatment Strategy Nationally Covered Indications**

1. CMS continues to nationally cover FDG PET imaging for the initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for male and female breast cancer only when used in staging distant metastasis.
2. CMS continues to nationally cover FDG PET to determine initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for melanoma other than for the evaluation of regional lymph nodes.
3. CMS continues to nationally cover FDG PET imaging for the detection of pre-treatment metastasis (i.e., staging) in newly diagnosed cervical cancers following conventional imaging.

**b) Initial Anti-Tumor Treatment Strategy Nationally Non-Covered Indications**

1. CMS continues to nationally non-cover initial anti-tumor treatment strategy in Medicare beneficiaries who have adenocarcinoma of the prostate.
2. CMS continues to nationally non-cover FDG PET imaging for diagnosis of breast cancer and initial staging of axillary nodes.
3. CMS continues to nationally non-cover FDG PET imaging for initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for the evaluation of regional lymph nodes in melanoma.
4. CMS continues to nationally non-cover FDG PET imaging for the diagnosis of cervical cancer related to initial anti-tumor treatment strategy.

**3) Subsequent Anti-tumor Treatment Strategy**

**Subsequent Anti-Tumor Treatment Strategy Nationally Covered Indications**

Three FDG PET scans are nationally covered when used to guide subsequent management of anti-tumor treatment strategy after completion of initial anti-cancer therapy. Coverage of more than three FDG PET scans to guide subsequent management of anti-tumor treatment strategy after completion of initial anti-cancer therapy shall be determined by the local Medicare Administrative Contractors.

See Attachment A - National FDG PET Coverage for Oncologic Conditions for the summary of the national FDG PET coverage for oncologic conditions effective June 11, 2013.

**4) Synopsis of Coverage of FDG PET for Oncologic Conditions**

See Attachment A - National FDG PET Coverage for Oncologic Conditions for the summary of the national FDG PET coverage for oncologic conditions effective June 11, 2013.

Also refer to the June 11, 2013 CMS Decision Memo for Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) for Solid Tumors (CAG-00181R4). (Accessed November 13, 2017)

**Note: Health Plan Note for Surveillance PET Scans:** For most cancer cases, PET is not covered as a screening test (i.e., testing patients without specific signs and symptoms of disease) and thus is not covered for surveillance of patients treated for cancer in whom there
is no clinical reason to suspect recurrent disease. However, some cases may require additional review for medical necessity.

b. **NCD for PET for Perfusion of the Heart (220.6.1)** (Accessed November 13, 2017)


   For payment rules for NCDs requiring CED, see the **Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials**.

d. **NCD for FDG PET for Infection and Inflammation (220.6.16)** (Accessed November 13, 2017)

e. **NCD for FDG PET for Myocardial Viability (220.6.8)** (Accessed November 13, 2017)

f. **NCD for FDG PET for Refractory Seizures (220.6.9)** (Accessed November 13, 2017)

g. **NCD for Positron Emission Tomography (NaF-18) to Identify Bone Metastasis of Cancer (220.6.19)**. (Accessed November 4, 2016)


   For payment rules for NCDs requiring CED, see the **Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials**.


2. **Combined PET (FDG)-CT**

   The term FDG refers to 2-deoxy-2-[F-18] fluoro-D-glucose, also known as F-18 fluorodeoxyglucose. The term FDG PET refers to positron emission tomography or to a positron emission tomogram, depending on context. FDG PET refers to PET imaging utilizing FDG as the radioactive tracer. The term FDG PET includes the use of combined or integrated positron emission tomography/computed tomography using FDG as the radioactive tracer (FDG PET/CT).

   See Section II Background of the **CMS Decision Memo for PET for Initial Treatment Strategy in Solid Tumors and Myeloma (CAG-00181R3)**. (Accessed November 13, 2017)

3. **Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease**

   On September 27, 2013, CMS has determined that the evidence is insufficient to conclude that the use of positron emission tomography (PET) amyloid-beta (Aβ) imaging is reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member for Medicare beneficiaries with dementia or neurodegenerative disease, and thus PET Aβ imaging is not covered under §1862(a) (1) (A) of the Social Security Act (“the Act”).
However, there is sufficient evidence that the use of PET Aβ imaging is promising in two scenarios: (1) to exclude Alzheimer’s disease (AD) in narrowly defined and clinically difficult differential diagnoses, such as AD versus frontotemporal dementia (FTD); and (2) to enrich clinical trials seeking better treatments or prevention strategies for AD, by allowing for selection of patients on the basis of biological as well as clinical and epidemiological factors.

Therefore, one PET Aβ scan per patient will be covered through coverage with evidence development (CED), under §1862(a)(1)(E) of the Act, in clinical studies that meet the criteria as outlined in the *NCD for Beta Amyloid Positron Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease (220.6.20)* (Accessed November 13, 2017)


For payment rules for NCDs requiring CED, *Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials*.

II. DEFINITIONS

III. REFERENCES


IV. REVISION HISTORY

11/20/2017 Annual review with no updates.

11/15/2016 Annual review with the following update:

Guideline 1.a [NCD for Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) for Oncologic Conditions (220.6.17)] - consolidated reference links

11/17/2015 Annual review with no updates.

04/21/2015 Guideline #1.c (FDG PET for Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases)

- Added reference link to the list of Medicare approved clinical trials.
- Added reference link to the *Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials* for payment rules for NCDs requiring CED.

Guideline 1.g [Positron Emission Tomography (NaF-18) to Identify Bone Metastasis of Cancer]

- Added reference link to the list of Medicare approved clinical trials.
- Added reference link to the *Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials* for payment rules for NCDs requiring CED.
Guideline #3 (Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease)

- Updated the reference information pertaining to the list of Medicare approved clinical trials.
- Added payment information pertaining to NCDs requiring CED.

12/16/2014  Annual review with the following updates:

Guideline 3 (Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease)

- Added reference link to the NCD for Beta Amyloid Positron Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease (220.6.20)
- Updated the reference link to the list of CMS approved clinical trials/clinical research studies

Definitions – removed the definition of Positron Emission Tomography (PET); already defined in Section I

05/20/2014  Guidelines #1 Positron Emission Tomography (PET) - Updated coverage language to align with the updated NCD for Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) for Oncologic Conditions (220.6.17). (Version #4; dated 03/17/2014)

12/17/2013  Annual review with no updates.

10/24/2013  Guideline #3 Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease - added applicable guidelines based on the CMS Decision Memo for Beta Amyloid Positron Emission Tomography in Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease (CAG-00431N). Also added reference links to the CMS approved clinical trials/clinical research studies website and the Coverage Summary for Experimental Procedures and Items, Investigational Devices and Clinical Trials.

06/24/2013  Updated to include the following changes based on the June 11, 2013 CMS Decision Memo for Positron Emission Tomography (FDG) for Solid Tumors (CAG-00181R4):

CMS ended the requirement for coverage with evidence development (CED) for 18F fluorodeoxyglucose positron emission tomography (FDG PET) for oncologic indications which are contained in section 220.6.17 of the Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual. This removes the requirement for prospective data collection by the National Oncologic PET Registry (NOPR) for those cancers or cancer types that had been covered under CED.

CMS has determined that three FDG PET scans are covered when used to guide subsequent management of anti-tumor treatment strategy after completion of initial anticancer therapy. Coverage of any additional FDG PET scans (that is, beyond three) used to guide subsequent management of antitumor treatment strategy after completion of initial anti-tumor therapy will be determined by local Medicare Administrative Contractors. Also added the note “For regions where there are no available Local Coverage Determinations for guidance, refer to nationally recognized guidelines, i.e., MCG™ Care Guidelines.”

12/17/2012  Annual review with no updates.
Attachment A - National FDG PET Coverage for Oncologic Conditions
(Effective on or after June 11, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDG PET for Cancers Tumor Type</th>
<th>Initial Treatment Strategy (formerly “diagnosis” &amp; “staging”)</th>
<th>Subsequent Treatment Strategy (formerly “restaging” and “monitoring response to treatment”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorectal</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head and Neck (not thyroid, CNS)</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lymphoma</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-small cell lung</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovary</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervix</td>
<td>Cover with exceptions*</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cell lung</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft tissue sarcoma</td>
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<td>Pancreas</td>
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<td>Cover</td>
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<td>Testes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prostate</td>
<td>Non-cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast (male and female)</td>
<td>Cover with exceptions*</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanoma</td>
<td>Cover with exceptions*</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other solid tumors</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myeloma</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<th>Subsequent Treatment Strategy (formerly “restaging” and “monitoring response to treatment”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All other cancers not listed</td>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>Cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cervix: Nationally non-covered for the initial diagnosis of cervical cancer related to initial anti-tumor treatment strategy. All other indications for initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for cervical cancer are nationally covered.

*Breast: Nationally non-covered for initial diagnosis and/or staging of axillary lymph nodes. Nationally covered for initial staging of metastatic disease. All other indications for initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for breast cancer are nationally covered.

*Melanoma: Nationally non-covered for initial staging of regional lymph nodes. All other indications for initial anti-tumor treatment strategy for melanoma are nationally covered.