

OSTEOPATHIC MANIPULATIONS (OMT)

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[Terms and Conditions](#) ⓘ

| Table of Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| POLICY SUMMARY | 1 |
| APPLICABLE CODES | 2 |
| DEFINITIONS | 2 |
| PURPOSE | 3 |
| REFERENCES | 3 |
| GUIDELINE HISTORY/REVISION INFORMATION | 4 |
| TERMS AND CONDITIONS | 4 |

Related Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines

- [Chiropractic Services](#)
- [Manipulation \(NCD 150.1\)](#)

Related Medicare Advantage Coverage Summary

- [Chiropractic Services](#)

POLICY SUMMARY

See [Purpose](#) ⓘ

Overview

Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) is a treatment employed, primarily by osteopathic physicians, to facilitate a patient's recovery from somatic dysfunction, defined under the American Osteopathic Association's Glossary of Terminology as: impaired or altered function of related components of the somatic (body framework) system: skeletal, arthroidal and myofascial structures and related vascular, lymphatic and neuroelements. The positional and motion aspects of somatic dysfunction are best described using at least one of three parameters: 1. The position of a body part as determined by palpation and reference to its adjacent defined structure, 2. The direction in which motion is freer, and 3. The direction in which motion is restricted.

The diagnosis of somatic dysfunction is made by determining the presence of one or more findings, known as T.A.R.T. (Tenderness, Asymmetry, Restriction of Motion and Tissue Abnormality). Osteopathic manipulative treatment includes thrust (active correction), muscle energy, high velocity-low amplitude, articulation, counterstrain, myofascial release, and visceral and craniosacral techniques. The chosen treatment will vary depending on patient's age and clinical condition.

Somatic dysfunction in one region can create compensatory somatic dysfunction in other regions. Osteopathic manipulative treatment can also be used to treat the somatic component of visceral disease and any organ system. This component can manifest as changes in the skeletal, arthroidal and myofascial tissues. Normalizing musculoskeletal activity (relaxing tense muscles, etc.) can normalize outflows through sympathetic or parasympathetic autonomic nervous systems to visceral systems, resulting in more normal visceral and any organ system function.

Guidelines

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment is covered when medically necessary and performed by a qualified physician, in patients whose history and physical examination indicate the presence of somatic dysfunction of one or more regions.

Note: Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment specifically encompasses only the procedure itself. Evaluation and management (E&M) services are covered, as a separate and distinct service when medically necessary and appropriately documented.

Limitations

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment is not covered when the indication of Coverage is not met, and conventional documentation of somatic dysfunction is not present in the patient's medical record.

Note: No E&M service is warranted for previously planned follow-up OMT treatments unless a new condition occurs or the patient's condition has changed substantially, necessitating an overall reassessment.

Documentation Requirements

The medical record should support the medical necessity of osteopathic manipulative treatment as taught in the United States Osteopathic Medical Schools and made available to Medicare upon request.

Documentation of examination findings of somatic dysfunction should describe pathology in the areas of the skeletal, arthroidal and myofascial structures as well as related vascular, lymphatic and neuroelements.

Functional improvement or decline is determined by the treating physician and may be cause for further interventions and/or procedures based upon the evaluation and management services and the presence or absence of medical necessity.

Utilization Guidelines

- The number of regions treated during any one session will depend upon the history, examination and medical decision-making utilized to determine medical necessity of the most appropriate intervention.
- The type, frequency and duration of services must be reasonable and consistent with the standards of practice in the medical community.

Treatment Guidelines

- Treatments, acute or chronic, should generally not exceed 1-2x/month.
- Only one OMT service should be billed per day, based on the description of the procedure code.
- Treatment beyond six months should be limited to cases of chronic incurable illness (e.g., postpolio, ALS, post CVA, etc.).

APPLICABLE CODES

The following list(s) of codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this guideline 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 the member specific benefit plan document 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 |
|----------|--|
| 98925 | Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT); 1-2 body regions involved |
| 98926 | Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT); 3-4 body regions involved |
| 98927 | Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT); 5-6 body regions involved |
| 98928 | Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT); 7-8 body regions involved |
| 98929 | Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT); 9-10 body regions involved |

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| ICD-10 Diagnosis Code | Description |
|-----------------------|--|
| M99.00 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of head region |
| M99.01 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of cervical region |
| M99.02 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of thoracic region |
| M99.03 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of lumbar region |
| M99.04 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of sacral region |
| M99.05 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of pelvic region |
| M99.06 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of lower extremity |
| M99.07 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of upper extremity |
| M99.08 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of rib cage |
| M99.09 | Segmental and somatic dysfunction of abdomen and other regions |

DEFINITIONS

Acute Somatic Dysfunction: Immediate or short-term impairment or altered function of related components of the somatic (body framework) system. Characterized in early stages by vasodilation, edema, tenderness, pain, and tissue contraction. Diagnosed by history and palpatory assessment of tenderness, asymmetry of motion and relative position, restriction of motion and tissue texture change.

Chronic Somatic Dysfunction: Impairment or altered function of related components of the somatic (body framework) system. It is characterized by tenderness, itching, fibrosis, paresthesias and tissue contraction.

Linkage: Dysfunctional segmental behavior where a single vertebra and an adjacent rib respond to the same regional motion tests with identical asymmetric behaviors (rather than opposing behaviors). This suggests visceral reflex inputs.

Primary: The somatic dysfunction that maintains a total pattern of dysfunction. The initial or first somatic dysfunction to appear temporally.

Secondary: Somatic dysfunction arising either from mechanical or neurophysiologic response subsequent to or as a consequence of other etiologies.

Somatic Dysfunction: Impaired or altered function of related components of the somatic (body framework) system: skeletal, arthrodial and myofascial structures, and their related vascular, lymphatic, and neural elements. Somatic dysfunction is treatable using osteopathic manipulative treatment. The positional and motion aspects of somatic dysfunction are best described using at least one of three parameters: 1). The position of a body part as determined by palpation and referenced to its adjacent defined structure, 2). The directions in which motion is freer, and 3). The directions in which motion is restricted.

Somatogenic: That which is produced by activity, reaction and change originating in the musculoskeletal system.

Type I Somatic Dysfunction: A group curve of thoracic and/or lumbar vertebrae in which the freedoms of motion are in neutral with side bending and rotation in opposite directions with maximum rotation at the apex (rotation occurs toward the convexity of the curve)

Type II Somatic Dysfunction: Thoracic or lumbar somatic dysfunction of a single vertebral unit in which the vertebra is significantly flexed or extended with side bending and rotation in the same direction (rotation occurs into the concavity of the curve).

PURPOSE

The Medicare Advantage Policy Guideline documents are generally used to support UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage claims processing activities and facilitate providers' submission of accurate claims for the specified services. The document can be used as a guide to help determine applicable:

- Medicare coding or billing requirements, and/or
- Medical necessity coverage guidelines; including documentation requirements.

UnitedHealthcare follows Medicare guidelines such as LCDs, NCDs, and other Medicare manuals for the purposes of determining coverage. It is expected providers retain or have access to appropriate documentation when requested to support coverage. Please utilize the links in the [References](#) section below to view the Medicare source materials used to develop this resource document. This document is not a replacement for the Medicare source materials that outline Medicare coverage requirements. Where there is a conflict between this document and Medicare source materials, the Medicare source materials will apply.

REFERENCES

CMS National Coverage Determinations (NCDs)

[Manipulation \(NCD 150.1\)](#)

CMS Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs)

| LCD | Medicare Part A | Medicare Part B |
|---|--|--|
| L33616 (Osteopathic Manipulation Treatment) NGS | CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, WI | CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, WI |
| L33929 (Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment) First Coast | | FL, PR, VI |

CMS Articles

| Article | Medicare Part A | Medicare Part B |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| A52435 (Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment) CGS | KY, OH | KY, OH |

| Article | Medicare Part A | Medicare Part B |
|---|--|--|
| A55318 (Response to Comments: Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment) NGS | CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, WI | CT, IL, MA, ME, MN, NH, NY, RI, VT, WI |

CMS Benefit Policy Manual

[Chapter 15; § 30.5 Chiropractor's Services, § 40.4 Definition of Physician/Practitioner, § 240 Chiropractic Services - General](#)

CMS Claims Processing Manual

[Chapter 12; § 10 General, § 220 Chiropractic Services](#)

UnitedHealthcare Commercial Policies

[Manipulative Therapy](#)

MLN Matters

[Article MM6890, Change Physician Specialty Code 12 to Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine](#)

GUIDELINE HISTORY/REVISION INFORMATION

Revisions to this summary document do not in any way modify the requirement that services be provided and documented in accordance with the Medicare guidelines in effect on the date of service in question.

| Date | Action/Description |
|------------|---|
| 08/14/2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review |

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are applicable to UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Plans offered by UnitedHealthcare and its affiliates.

These Policy Guidelines are provided for informational purposes, and do not constitute medical advice. Treating physicians and healthcare providers are solely responsible for determining what care to provide to their patients. Members should always consult their physician before making any decisions about medical care.

Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document* and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The member specific benefit plan document identifies which services are covered, which are excluded, and which are subject to limitations. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document supersedes the Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines.

Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are developed as needed, are regularly reviewed and updated, and are subject to change. They represent a portion of the resources used to support UnitedHealthcare coverage decision making. UnitedHealthcare may modify these Policy Guidelines at any time by publishing a new version of the policy on this website. Medicare source materials used to develop these guidelines include, but are not limited to, CMS National Coverage Determinations (NCDs), Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs), Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Medicare Claims Processing Manual, Medicare Program Integrity Manual, Medicare Managed Care Manual, etc. The information presented in the Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines is believed to be accurate and current as of the date of publication, and is provided on an "AS IS" basis. Where there is a conflict between this document and Medicare source materials, the Medicare source materials will apply.

You are responsible for submission of accurate claims. Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines are intended to ensure that coverage decisions are made accurately based on the code or codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage Policy Guidelines use Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), or other coding guidelines. References to CPT® or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claims payment.

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*For more information on a specific member's benefit coverage, please call the customer service number on the back of the member ID card or refer to the [Administrative Guide](#).