

Evidence Based Guideline

Dynamic Spinal Visualization

File Name: dynamic_spinal_visualization
Origination: 3/2009
Last CAP Review: 6/2011
Next CAP Review: 6/2012
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Description of Procedure or Service

Dynamic spinal visualization is a general term addressing different imaging technologies, including digital motion x-ray and videofluoroscopy (also known as cineradiography). These technologies allow the simultaneous visualization of movement of internal body structures, such as the spine (vertebrae), with corresponding external body movement. These technologies have been proposed for the evaluation of spinal disorders including low back pain.

All dynamic spinal visualization methods use x-rays to create images either on film, video monitor, or computer screen. Digital motion x-ray involves the use of either film x-ray or computer-based x-ray "snapshots" taken in sequence as a patient moves. Film x-rays are digitized into a computer for manipulation while computer-based x-rays are automatically created in a digital format. The digitized snapshots are then put in order using a computer program and played on a video monitor, creating a moving image of the inside of the body. This moving image can then be evaluated by a physician alone or by using a computer that evaluates several aspects of the body's structure such as intervertebral flexion and extension to determine the presence or absence of abnormalities.

Videofluoroscopy and cineradiography are different names for the same procedure that uses a technique called fluoroscopy to create real-time video images of internal structures of the body. Unlike standard x-rays that take a single picture at one point in time, fluoroscopy provides motion pictures of the body. The results of these techniques can be displayed on a video monitor as the procedure is being conducted as well as recorded to allow computer analysis or evaluation at a later time. Like digital motion x-ray, the results can be evaluated by a physician alone or using the assistance of computer analysis software.

*****Note: This Evidence Based Guideline is complex and technical. For questions concerning the technical language and/or specific clinical indications for its use, please consult your physician.**

Evidence Based Guideline for Dynamic Spinal Visualization

Dynamic spinal visualization, including, but not limited to, digital motion x-ray of the spine, with or without digitization of spinal x-rays and computerized analysis of the back or spine, is not recommended for any indication. Also, videofluoroscopy (cineradiography), when used to visualize movement of the back or spine, is not recommended.

Medical Evidence regarding Dynamic Spinal Visualization indicates it is not recommended in the following situations

Current literature evaluating the clinical utility of dynamic spinal visualization techniques, including digital motion x-ray and cineradiography (video fluoroscopy) for the evaluation and assessment of the spine, is limited to a few studies involving very small numbers of participants.

Dynamic Spinal Visualization

The clinical utility of this technique has not been demonstrated. While reports have studied the correlation of this technique to disc degeneration, no studies have evaluated the incremental value of this information compared to the standard evaluation. In addition, no studies have shown how the use of this information has an impact on or improves health outcomes.

Studies have shown that abnormalities in spinal motion are found in individuals with low back pain, particularly those with spondylolisthesis. However, the test does not always separate those with disease from those without disease. In addition, this technique continues to evolve.

Benefits Application

This medical policy relates only to the services or supplies described herein. Please refer to the Member's Benefit Booklet for availability of benefits. Member's benefits may vary according to benefit design; therefore member benefit language should be reviewed before applying the terms of this medical policy.

Billing/Coding/Physician Documentation Information

This guideline may apply to the following codes. Inclusion of a code in this section does not guarantee that it will be reimbursed. For further information on reimbursement guidelines, please see Administrative Policies on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina web site at www.bcbsnc.com. They are listed in the Category Search on the Medical Policy search page.

Applicable codes: 76120, 76125

CPT code 76120 can be used once per anatomic area with modifier -59 appended to the code when it is used for additional anatomic regions.

Scientific Background and Reference Sources

BCBSA Medical Policy Reference Manual [Electronic Version]. 6.01.46, 3/13/08

BCBSA Medical Policy Reference Manual [Electronic Version]. 6.01.46, 9/10/09

BCBSA Medical Policy Reference Manual [Electronic Version]. 6.01.46, 9/16/10

Policy Implementation/Update Information

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| 3/30/09 | New Evidence Based Guideline issued. Dynamic spinal visualization, including, but not limited to, digital motion x-ray of the spine, with or without digitization of spinal x-rays and computerized analysis of the back or spine, is not recommended for any indication. Also, videofluoroscopy (cineradiography), when used to visualize movement of the back or spine, is not recommended. (adn) |
| 6/22/10 | Policy Guideline Number(s) removed (amw) |
| 9/28/10 | Description section revised. Specialty Matched Consultant Advisory Panel review 8/25/2010. No change in guideline statement. Draft policy approved as written. (adn) |
| 7/19/11 | Description section revised. Specialty Matched Consultant Advisory Panel meeting 6/29/11. Guideline approved as written. (adn) |

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