Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization

**Description of Procedure or Service**

Transpupillary thermotherapy is a technique in which heat is delivered to the choroid and retinal pigment epithelium through the pupil using a modified diode laser. This laser technique contrasts with the laser used in standard photocoagulation therapy in that transpupillary thermotherapy uses a lower power laser for more prolonged periods of time and is designed to gently heat the choroidal lesion, thus limiting damage to the overlying retinal pigment epithelium.

There is ongoing research interest in the use of transpupillary thermotherapy to treat subfoveal choroidal neovascularization.

**Policy**

BCBSNC will not provide coverage for Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization. This is considered investigational. BCBSNC does not cover investigational services.

**Benefits Application**

Please refer to Certificate for availability of benefit. See Limitations and Exclusions for investigational services.

**When Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Choroidal Neovascularization is covered**

Not applicable.

**When Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Choroidal Neovascularization is not covered**

Transpupillary thermotherapy is considered investigational as a treatment of choroidal neovascularization.
Policy: Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization

Policy Guidelines

Not applicable.

Billing/Coding/Physician Documentation Information

Applicable code: 0016T

BCBSNC may request medical records for determination of medical necessity. When medical records are requested, letters of support and/or explanation are often useful, but are not sufficient documentation unless all specific information needed to make a medical necessity determination is included.

Policy Key Words

Key Words: Thermotherapy, Transpupillary for Treatment of Choroidal Neovascularization, CNV, Vision, Ophthalmology, Optic, Retinal, Retina, Laser

Medical Term Definitions

Choroid

the thin, pigmented, vascular coat of the eye; it furnishes blood to the retina and conducts arteries and nerves to the structures in the front of the eye.

Laser

intense light source that can act like a knife, by cutting body parts.

Neovascularization

new blood vessel formation in abnormal tissue or in abnormal positions.

Scientific Background and Reference Sources


Policy Implementation/Update Information

5/2002 Original policy issued.
5/2003 Specialty Matched Consultant Advisory Panel review 3/24/2003. No changes to criteria. 67220 and 0017T removed from Billing/Coding section. With the addition of Category III CPT code 0016T, codes 67220 and 0017T are no longer appropriate. Also removed codes G0185 and G0187 from Billing/Coding Section. These codes were deleted for 2003. Typos corrected.
Medical policy is not an authorization, certification, explanation of benefits or a contract. Benefits and eligibility are determined before medical guidelines and payment guidelines are applied. Benefits are determined by the group contract and subscriber certificate that is in effect at the time services are rendered. This document is solely provided for informational purposes only and is based on research of current medical literature and review of common medical practices in the treatment and diagnosis of disease. Medical practices and knowledge are constantly changing and BCBSNC reserves the right to review and revise its medical policies periodically.