

## Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulator

A Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulator (TENS) is covered for the treatment of recipients with chronic, intractable pain or acute post-operative pain who meet the coverage rules listed below.

### Coverage and Payment Policy

This service requires prior authorization.

When a TENS unit is used for acute post-operative pain, the medical necessity is limited to 30 days from the day of surgery. Payment will be made only as a rental. A TENS unit will be denied as not medically necessary for acute pain (less than three months duration) other than post-operative pain.

For chronic pain, the medical record must document the location of the pain, the duration of time the recipient has had the pain, and the presumed etiology of the pain. The pain must have been present for at least three months. Other appropriate treatment modalities must have been tried and failed, and the medical record must document what treatment modalities have been used (including the names and dosage of medication), the length of time that each type of treatment was used, and the results.

The presumed etiology of the pain must be a type that is accepted as responding to TENS therapy. Examples of conditions for which a TENS unit are not considered to be medically necessary are (not all-inclusive): headache, visceral abdominal pain, pelvic pain, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) pain.

When used for the treatment of chronic, intractable pain, the TENS unit must be used by the recipient on a trial basis for a minimum of one month (30 days), but not to exceed two months. The trial period will be paid as a rental. The trial period must be monitored by the physician to determine the effectiveness of the TENS unit in modulating the pain. For coverage of a purchase, the physician must determine that the recipient is likely to derive significant therapeutic benefit from continuous use of the unit over a long period of time. The physician's records must document a reevaluation of the recipient at the end of the trial period, must indicate how often the recipient used the TENS unit, the typical duration of use each time, and the results.

A 4 lead TENS unit may be used with either 2 leads or 4 leads, depending on the characteristics of the recipient's pain. If it is ordered for use with 4 leads, the medical record must document why 2 leads are insufficient to meet the patients' needs

During the rental of a TENS unit, supplies for the unit are included in the rental allowance; there is no additional allowance for electrodes, lead wires, batteries, etc. If a TENS unit is purchased, the allowance includes lead wires and one month's supply of electrodes, conductive paste or gel (if needed), and batteries.

Separate allowance will be made for replacement supplies when they are medically necessary and are used with a TENS unit that has been purchased and/or approved by the Medical Assistance Program. If 2 TENS leads are necessary, then a maximum of one unit would be allowed per month; if 4 TENS leads are necessary, a maximum of two units per month would be allowed. If the use of the TENS unit is less than daily, the frequency of billing for the TENS supply code should be reduced proportionally.

#### Unit Replacement Components

There should be no separate billing, and there will be no separate allowance, for replacement electrodes, conductive paste or gel, replacement batteries, or a battery charger.

Replacement of lead wires will be covered when they are inoperative due to damage and the TENS unit is still medically necessary. Replacement more often than every 12 months would rarely be medically necessary.

A TENS supply allowance includes electrodes (any type), conductive paste or gel (if needed, depending on the type of electrode), tape or other adhesive (if needed, depending on the type of electrode), adhesive remover, skin preparation materials, batteries (9 volt or AA, single use or rechargeable), and a battery charger (if rechargeable batteries are used). One unit of service represents supplies needed for one month for a 2 lead TENS, assuming daily use.

#### Unit Supplies

Other supplies, including but not limited to the following, will not be separately allowed: adapters (snap, banana, alligator, tab, button, clip), belt clips, adhesive remover, additional connecting cable for lead wires, carrying pouches, or cover.

A conductive garment for use with a TENS unit is rarely medically necessary, but may be covered if all of the following conditions are met:

It has received permission or approval for marketing by the Food and Drug Administration; and

It has been prescribed by a physician for use in delivering covered TENS treatment; and

One of the medical indications outlined below is met:

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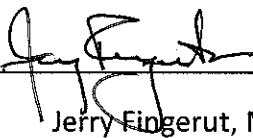
The recipient cannot manage without the conductive garment because there is such a large area or so many sites to be stimulated and the stimulation would have to be delivered so frequently that it is not feasible to use conventional electrodes, adhesive tapes, and lead wires; or

The recipient cannot manage without the conductive garment for the treatment of chronic intractable pain because the areas or sites to be stimulated are inaccessible with the use of conventional electrodes, adhesive tapes, and lead wires; or

The recipient has a documented medical condition, such as skin problems, that preclude the application of conventional electrodes, adhesive tapes, and lead wires; or

The recipient requires electrical stimulation beneath a cast either to treat disuse atrophy where the nerve supply to the muscle is intact or to treat chronic intractable pain.

The physician ordering the TENS unit must be the attending physician or a consulting physician for the disease or condition resulting in the need for the TENS unit.

Approved:  Associate Medical Director  
Jerry Fingerut, MD

Date: 23 November 2016

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_