Continuous Passive Motion in the Home Setting

Introduction

A continuous passive motion (CPM) device moves or flexes a joint. This movement is done without the patient’s help. A continuous passive motion device has been used most often after certain knee surgeries to allow the knee joint to slowly bend. Using CPM was very common; however, newer studies show that it does not improve the outcomes of knee surgery except in some complex knee surgeries, or when people have prolonged bed rest due to some other problem after knee replacement. Continuous passive motion usually starts in the hospital. For those who need it at home after knee surgery it is usually covered for 21 days. There are a number of high quality studies showing that CPM is effective for specific types of knee surgery. There are not enough high quality studies to show how effective CPM is for other joints. This policy describes when CPM is considered medically necessary.

Note: The Introduction section is for your general knowledge and is not to be taken as policy coverage criteria. The rest of the policy uses specific words and concepts familiar to medical professionals. It is intended for providers. A provider can be a person, such as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or dentist. A provider also can be a place where medical care is given, like a hospital, clinic, or lab. This policy informs them about when a service may be covered.
This policy only addresses continuous passive motion (CPM) in the home setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Medical Necessity</th>
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</table>
| **Total knee arthroplasty (TKA) or TKA repair** | The use of continuous passive motion (CPM) in the home may be considered medically necessary as an adjunct to physical therapy in the following situations:  
- The member is not able to ambulate or comply with rehabilitation exercises. Examples include:  
  - Complex regional pain syndrome (reflex sympathetic dystrophy)  
  - Extensive arthrofibrosis or tendon fibrosis  
  - Physical, mental, or behavioral inability to participate in active physical therapy  
- Following TKA, CPM in the home setting will be allowable for up to 21 days after surgery while patients are immobile or unable to bear weight |
| **Articular cartilage repair, such as:** | The use of CPM may be considered medically necessary as an adjunct to physical therapy in the following situations:  
- During the non-weight-bearing rehabilitation period  
- For up to 6 weeks maximum |
| - microfracture  
- osteochondral grafting  
- autologous chondrocyte implantation  
- treatment of osteochondritis dissecans  
- repair of tibial plateau fractures |  |
| **Other** | The use of CPM in the home setting for all other conditions not listed in this medical policy is considered not medically necessary. |

### Documentation Requirements

The patient’s medical records submitted for review for all conditions should document that medical necessity criteria are met. The record should include the following:

- Documentation of the type of knee surgery member had undergone and that member can’t bear weight after surgery.

- For total knee replacement or total knee repair, additional documentation of the following:
  - That member is not able to comply with physical therapy because of certain conditions.
Documentation Requirements

Examples include:

- Complex regional pain syndrome (reflex sympathetic dystrophy)
- Extensive arthrofibrosis or tendon fibrosis
- Physical, mental, or behavioral inability to participate in active physical therapy

Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCPCS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0935</td>
<td>Continuous passive motion exercise device for use on knee only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0936</td>
<td>Continuous passive motion exercise device for use other than knee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Related Information

N/A

Evidence Review

Description

Continuous passive motion (CPM) devices are used to keep a joint in motion without patient assistance. CPM is being evaluated for treatment and postsurgical rehabilitation of the upper- and lower-limb joints and for a variety of musculoskeletal conditions.
Background

Physical therapy of joints following surgery focuses both on passive motion to restore mobility and active exercises to restore strength. While passive motion can be administered by a therapist, continuous passive motion (CPM) devices have also been used. CPM is thought to improve recovery by stimulating the healing of articular tissues and the circulation of synovial fluid; reducing local edema; and preventing adhesions, joint stiffness or contractures, or cartilage degeneration. CPM has been most thoroughly investigated in the knee, particularly after total knee arthroplasty (TKA) or ligamentous or cartilage repair. Acceptance of its use in the knee joint has created interest in CPM for other weight-bearing joints (ie, hip, ankle, metatarsals) and non-weight-bearing joints (ie, shoulder, elbow, metacarpals, interphalangeal joints). Use of CPM in stroke and burn patients is also being explored.

The device moves the joint (ie, flexion and extension) without patient assistance, continuously for extended periods of time (eg, up to 24 hours per day). An electrical power unit is used to set the variable range of motion (ROM) and speed. The initial settings for ROM are based on a patient’s level of comfort and other factors that are assessed intraoperatively. The ROM is increased by 3° to 5° per day, as tolerated. The speed and ROM can be varied, depending on joint stability. The use of the device may be initiated in the immediate postoperative period and then continued at home for a variable period of time.

Over the past 10 to 20 years, hospital lengths of stay have progressively shortened, and in some cases surgical repair may be done either as an outpatient or with a length of stay of 1 to 2 days. As a result, there has been a considerable shift in the rehabilitation regimen, moving from an intensive in-hospital program to a less intensive outpatient program. Some providers may want patients to continue CPM in the home as a means of duplicating the services offered with a longer (7-day) hospital stay.

The focus of the current review is to examine the literature on the use of postoperative CPM in the home setting. Relevant comparisons are treatment outcomes of CPM when used alone or with PT, compared with PT alone.

Summary of Evidence

For individuals who have total knee arthroplasty (TKA) and receive continuous passive motion (CPM) in the home setting, the evidence includes randomized clinical trials (RCTs), case series, and systematic reviews. Relevant outcomes are symptoms and functional outcomes. Early trials generally used CPM in the inpatient setting and are less relevant to today’s practice patterns of
short hospital stays followed by outpatient rehabilitation. Current postoperative rehabilitation protocols differ considerably from when the largest body of evidence was collected, making it difficult to apply available evidence to the present situation. For use of CPM after TKA, recent studies have suggested that institutional and home use of CPM has no benefit compared to standard physical therapy (PT). There were no studies evaluating CPM in patients who could not perform standard PT. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have articular cartilage repair of the knee who receive CPM in the home setting, the evidence includes nonrandomized studies, case series, and studies with nonclinical outcomes (eg, histology), and systematic reviews of these studies. Relevant outcomes are symptoms and functional outcomes. Systematic reviews of CPM for this indication have cited studies reporting better histologic outcomes in patients following CPM. A few studies have reported clinical outcomes, but inadequacies of these studies do not permit conclusions on efficacy. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have musculoskeletal conditions other than TKA or knee cartilage repair requiring PT who receive CPM in the home setting, the evidence includes RCTs for some conditions and case series for others. Relevant outcomes are symptoms and functional outcomes. Three small RCTs of CPM after rotator cuff surgery showed some evidence that CPM after this shoulder surgery improved short-term pain and range of motion (ROM); however, the trials were not high quality, and the small differences in outcomes may not be clinically important. Two trials reported short-term improvements in ROM for patients undergoing CPM, and 1 reported a short-term reduction in pain. None reported long-term improvements, and there are no reported benefits in functional status. Therefore, the clinical significance of the short-term improvements reported is uncertain. In addition, there is uncertainty about the optimal PT regimen following shoulder surgery such that the optimal treatment comparator for CPM is unclear. Two small RCTs compared CPM with conventional PT for treatment of adhesive capsulitis. One of the trials focused on diabetic patients with adhesive capsulitis. Both reported comparable improvements in range of motion and functional ability between treatment groups. For other musculoskeletal conditions, RCTs do not exist; case series either did not show efficacy of CPM or had important methodologic flaws. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have had a stroke requiring PT who receive CPM in the home setting, the evidence includes 1 small RCT. Relevant outcomes are symptoms and functional outcomes. This trial reported a trend toward improved shoulder joint stability, but no statistical difference
between CPM plus PT compared to PT alone. The trial was small and treatment lasted only 20
days. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

**Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials**

Some currently unpublished trials that might influence this review are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of Key Trials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCT No.</th>
<th>Trial Name</th>
<th>Planned Enrollment</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCT01420887</td>
<td>Preservation of Joint Function Using Postoperative Continuous Passive Motion (CPM): A Pilot Study</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Dec 2018</td>
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</table>

NCT: national clinical trial.

**Clinical Input Received From Physician Specialty Societies and Academic Medical Centers**

While the various physician specialty societies and academic medical centers may collaborate with and make recommendations during this process, through the provision of appropriate reviewers, input received does not represent an endorsement or position statement by the physician specialty societies or academic medical centers, unless otherwise noted.

**2016 Input**

In response to requests, input was received from 2 physician specialty societies and 1 academic medical center while this policy was under review in 2016. Input considered continuous passive motion (CPM) medically necessary as an adjunct to physical therapy during the non-weight-bearing rehabilitation period following articular cartilage repair procedures of the knee. One reviewer referred to the 2015 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery guidelines on the surgical management of osteoarthritis of the knee, which concluded that there was strong evidence that CPM after knee arthroplasty does not improve outcomes.
**2010 Input**

In response to requests, input was received from 2 physician specialty societies and 5 academic medical centers while this policy was under review in 2010. Overall, clinical input supported the use of CPM under conditions of low postoperative mobility or inability to comply with rehabilitation exercises after total knee arthroplasty or total knee arthroplasty revision or during the non-weight-bearing rehabilitation period following articular cartilage repair procedures of the knee. Support was limited for use of CPM in joints other than the knee, or in situations or conditions other than those described in this policy.

**2008 Input**

In response to requests, input was received from 1 physician specialty society and 2 academic medical centers while this policy was under review in 2008. The 3 reviewers interpreted the existing literature supporting the use of CPM for the knee for at least 7 days postoperatively, whether in the hospital or home, and suggested that longer use of CPM would be warranted for special conditions.

**Practice Guidelines and Position Statements**

**American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons**

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) published evidence-based guidelines on the surgical management of osteoarthritis of the knee in 2015. AAOS identified 2 high-quality studies and 5 moderate-quality studies that evaluated the use of CPM. In 1 high-quality study, CPM was used for about 2 weeks after discharge. AAOS concluded that, “the combined results provide strong evidence that the surgical outcomes for those who used continuous passive motion are not better than for those who did not use continuous passive motion.”

**French Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Society**

Clinical practice guidelines from the French Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Society, published in 2007, concluded that evidence is not sufficient to recommend substituting CPM for
other rehabilitation techniques aimed at early mobilization after total knee arthroplasty. The evidence review did not find a positive effect of CPM over intermittent early mobilization, at short- or long-term follow-up.

**Medicare National Coverage**

In 2005, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a national coverage determination on durable medical equipment reference, which stated:

Continuous passive motion devices are devices covered for patients who have received a total knee replacement. To qualify for coverage, use of the device must commence within 2 days following surgery. In addition, coverage is limited to that portion of the 3-week period following surgery during which the device is used in the patient’s home. There is insufficient evidence to justify coverage of these devices for longer periods of time or for other applications.

**Regulatory Status**

Continuous passive motion devices are considered class I devices by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and are exempt from 510(k) requirements. This classification does not require submission of clinical data on efficacy but only notification of FDA prior to marketing. FDA product code: BXB.

**References**


### History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/11/15</td>
<td>New Policy. Add to Durable Medical Equipment section. In the Policy Guidelines, plan specific language allows using the device for up to 21 days. Literature current through June 3, 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01/16</td>
<td>Interim Update, approved September 13, 2016. Clinical input reviewed; reference 43 added. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/24/17</td>
<td>Policy moved into new format; no change to policy statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/01/17</td>
<td>Interim Review, approved June 22, 2017. The word “intra-” removed from the second bullet point of the first policy statement and from the text. Policy statements otherwise unchanged; rewritten for improved clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/01/18</td>
<td>Annual Review, approved April 18, 2018. Policy updated with literature review through January 2018; reference 33 added. Policy statements unchanged.</td>
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