MEDICAL POLICY – 7.01.130
Axial Lumbosacral Interbody Fusion

BCBSA Ref. Policy: 7.01.130

Effective Date: July 1, 2023
Last Revised: June 12, 2023
Replaces: N/A

RELATED MEDICAL POLICIES:
7.01.107 Interspinous and Interlaminar Stabilization/Distraction Devices (Spacers)
7.01.138 Interspinous Fixation (Fusion) Devices
7.01.542 Lumbar Fusion
7.01.551 Lumbar Spine Decompression Surgery: Discectomy, Foraminotomy, Laminotomy, Lamineotomy

Select a hyperlink below to be directed to that section.

POLICY CRITERIA | CODING | RELATED INFORMATION
EVIDENCE REVIEW | REFERENCES | HISTORY

∞ Clicking this icon returns you to the hyperlinks menu above.

Introduction

Fusing the bones at the lowest part of the back may be one choice to treat lower back (lumbar) pain. When this kind of fusion is needed, it’s usually done by making an opening (an incision) through the back muscles and other tissue. In axial lumbar interbody fusion, the incision is made in the buttock. A tube, long enough to reach the spine, is inserted upwards along a specific path. Special tools are then threaded through the tube to reach the disc that sits between the bones. The surgeon cuts way the damaged disk and removes it through the tube. The tube also guides the path for the bone graft material and a small implant. The bone graft material promotes bone growth, and over time the two bones grow together and are permanently joined. Because more studies are needed to determine the risks and benefits of this procedure compared to other methods of lumbar fusion, this service is considered unproven (investigational).

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.
**Policy Coverage Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Investigational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion</td>
<td>Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion is considered investigational.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22586</td>
<td>Arthrodesis, pre-sacral interbody technique, including disc space preparation, discectomy, with posterior instrumentation, with image guidance, includes bone graft when performed, L5-S1 interspace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22899</td>
<td>Unlisted procedure, spine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** CPT codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by the American Medical Association (AMA). HCPCS codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by Centers for Medicare Services (CMS).

**Related Information**

N/A

**Evidence Review**

**Description**

Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion (LIF; also called presacral, transsacral or paracoccygeal interbody fusion) is a minimally invasive technique designed to provide anterior access to the L4-S1 disc spaces for interbody fusion, while minimizing damage to muscular, ligamentous, neural, and vascular structures. It is performed under fluoroscopic guidance.
Background

Interbody Fusion

Interbody fusion is a surgical procedure that fuses two adjacent vertebral bodies of the spine. Lumbar interbody fusion may be performed in individuals with spinal stenosis and instability, spondylolisthesis, scoliosis, following discectomy, or for adjacent-level disc disease.

Axial Lumbosacral Interbody Fusion

Axial lumbosacral interbody fusion (LIF; also called presacral, transsacral, or paracoccygeal interbody fusion) is a minimally invasive technique designed to provide anterior access to the L4-S1 disc spaces for interbody fusion while minimizing damage to muscular, ligamentous, neural, and vascular structures. It is performed under fluoroscopic guidance.

An advantage of axial LIF is that it preserves the annulus and all paraspinous soft tissue structures. However, there is an increased need for fluoroscopy and an inability to address intracanal pathology or visualize the discectomy procedure directly. Complications of the axial approach may include perforation of the bowel and injury to blood vessels and/or nerves.

Summary of Evidence

For individuals with degenerative spine disease at the L4-S1 disc spaces who receive axial LIF, the evidence includes comparative systematic review of case series and a retrospective comparative study. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, quality of life, and treatment-related morbidity. The systematic review found that fusion rates were higher following transforaminal LIF than following axial LIF, although this difference decreased with use of bone morphogenetic protein or pedicle screws. The findings of this systematic review were limited by the lack of prospective comparative studies and differences in how fusion rates were determined. Studies have suggested that complication rates may also be increased with 2-level axial LIF. Controlled trials with clinical outcome measures are needed to better define the benefits and risks of this procedure compared with treatment alternatives. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.
Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials

A search of Clinicaltrials.gov in March 2023 did not identify any ongoing trials that would influence this review.

Clinical Input 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.

In response to requests, input was received from two specialty medical societies and three academic medical centers while this policy was under review in 2011. The input considered axial LIF to be investigational.

Practice Guidelines and Position Statements

The purpose of the following information is to provide reference material. Inclusion does not imply endorsement or alignment with the policy conclusions.

Guidelines or position statements will be considered for inclusion if they were issued by, or jointly by, a U.S. professional society, an international society with U.S. representation, or National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Priority will be given to guidelines that are informed by a systematic review, include strength of evidence ratings, and include a description of management of conflict of interest.

North American Spine Society

In 2014, the North American Spine Society published guidelines on the treatment of degenerative spondylolisthesis. The North American Spine Society gave a grade B recommendation for surgical decompression with fusion in patients with spinal stenosis and
spondylolisthesis. The guidelines discussed posterolateral fusion, 360° fusion, and minimally invasive fusion; it did not address axial LIF.

**National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence**

In July 2018, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provided evidence-based recommendations on transaxial interbody lumbosacral fusion for low back pain in adults. The recommendation, based on a literature review conducted in December 2017, states, "Evidence on the safety of transaxial interbody lumbosacral fusion for severe chronic low back pain shows that there are serious but well-recognized complications. Evidence on efficacy is adequate in quality and quantity. Therefore, this procedure may be used provided that standard arrangements are in place for clinical governance, consent and audit. This procedure should only be done by a surgeon with specific training in the procedure, who should carry out their initial procedures with an experienced mentor."

**Medicare National Coverage**

There is no national coverage determination.

**Regulatory Status**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared for marketing multiple anterior spinal intervertebral body fixation device systems through the 510(k) pathway (see Table 2). The systems are not intended to treat severe scoliosis, severe spondylolisthesis (grades 3 and 4), tumor, or trauma. The devices are also not meant for vertebral compression fractures or any other condition in which the mechanical integrity of the vertebral body is compromised. Their usage is limited to anterior supplemental fixation of the lumbar spine at L5-S1 or L4-S1 disc spaces in conjunction with legally marketed facet or pedicle screw systems.

FDA product code: KWQ
Table 2. Select Anterior Spinal Intervertebral Body Fixation Orthoses Cleared by FDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthotic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Date Cleared</th>
<th>501(k) No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TranS1® AxiaLIF™ System</td>
<td>For patients requiring fusion to treat pseudoarthrosis, unsuccessful previous fusion, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis (grade 1 or 2), or degenerative disc disease limited to anterior supplemental fixation of L5-S1 in conjunction with legally marketed pedicle screws</td>
<td>TranS1</td>
<td>12/04</td>
<td>K040426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TranS1® AxiaLIF™ System</td>
<td>Indication modified to include facet screws</td>
<td>TranS1</td>
<td>06/05</td>
<td>K050965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TranS1® AxiaLIF® II System</td>
<td>For patients requiring fusion to treat pseudoarthrosis, unsuccessful previous fusion, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis (grade 1 or 2), or degenerative disc disease limited to anterior supplemental fixation of L4-S1 in conjunction with legally marketed facet and pedicle screws</td>
<td>TranS1</td>
<td>04/08</td>
<td>K073643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TranS1® AxiaLIF® 2L System</td>
<td>Indication unchanged, marketed with branded bone morphogenetic protein</td>
<td>TranS1</td>
<td>01/10</td>
<td>K092124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| TranS1® AxiaLIF® Plus System | Intended to provide anterior stabilization of the L5-S1 or L4-S1 spinal segment (s) as an adjunct to spinal fusion  
This device’s instruments are used for independently distracting the L5-S1 or L4-S1 vertebral bodies and inserting bone graft material (Dt3M, autograft or autologous blood) into the disc space.  
Use limited to anterior supplemental fixation of the lumbar spine at L5-S1 or L4-S1 in conjunction with use of legally marketed facet screw or pedicle screw systems at the same levels that are treated with AxiaLIF | TranS1       | 03/11        | K102334    |
Adapted from the Food and Drug Administration (2007, 2008)\textsuperscript{1,2}

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/27/12</td>
<td>Replace Policy – Policy Section on axial LIF moved from policy 7.01.542 (Minimally Invasive Lumbar Interbody Fusion) and updated with literature search through September 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/27/12</td>
<td>Update Coding Section – ICD-10 codes are now effective 10/01/2014.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/29/13</td>
<td>Replace policy. Policy updated with literature review through August 2012; references 7 and 8 added; one reference removed. Policy statement unchanged. CPT coding updated: CPT codes 22586 and 0309T, effective 1/1/13, added; descriptors changed for codes 0195T and 1096T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/30/13</td>
<td>Update Related Policies. Change title to 7.01.120.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/21/14</td>
<td>Replace policy. Policy updated with literature review through September 30, 2013. Reference 5 added; others renumbered/removed. Policy statement unchanged. ICD-9 code 81.08 descriptor updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/28/15</td>
<td>Annual Review. Policy updated with literature review through September 24, 2014; references 6, 13 added; policy statement unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/01/15</td>
<td>Coding update. ICD-10 PCS codes added; these were inadvertently removed at last publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/01/18</td>
<td>Annual Review, approved June 22. Policy updated with literature review through February 2018; no references added. Policy statement unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01/19</td>
<td>Removed CPT code 0309T from policy as it was terminated 1/1/18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01/20</td>
<td>Coding update, removed CPT codes 0195T and 0196T as they were terminated 1/1/19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Date | Comments
--- | ---
10/01/22 | Update to Related Policies. Removed related policy 7.01.120 Facet Arthroplasty due to archival.
07/01/23 | Annual Review, approved June 12, 2023. Policy updated with literature review through January 16, 2023; no references added. Policy statement unchanged. Changed the wording from "patient" to "individual" throughout the policy for standardization.

**Disclaimer:** This medical policy is a guide in evaluating the medical necessity of a particular service or treatment. The Company adopts policies after careful review of published peer-reviewed scientific literature, national guidelines and local standards of practice. Since medical technology is constantly changing, the Company reserves the right to review and update policies as appropriate. Member contracts differ in their benefits. Always consult the member benefit booklet or contact a member service representative to determine coverage for a specific medical service or supply. CPT codes, descriptions and materials are copyrighted by the American Medical Association (AMA). ©2023 Premera All Rights Reserved.

**Scope:** Medical policies are systematically developed guidelines that serve as a resource for Company staff when determining coverage for specific medical procedures, drugs or devices. Coverage for medical services is subject to the limits and conditions of the member benefit plan. Members and their providers should consult the member benefit booklet or contact a customer service representative to determine whether there are any benefit limitations applicable to this service or supply. This medical policy does not apply to Medicare Advantage.
Discrimination is Against the Law

Premera Blue Cross (Premera) complies with applicable Federal and Washington state civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Premera does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Premera provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as qualified sign language interpreters and written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats). Premera provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages. If you need these services, contact the Civil Rights Coordinator. If you believe that Premera has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, you can file a grievance with: Civil Rights Coordinator — Complaints and Appeals, PO Box 91102, Seattle, WA 98111, Toll free: 855-332-4535, Fax: 425-918-5592, TTY: 711, Email AppealsDepartmentInquiries@Premera.com. You can file a grievance in person or by mail, fax, or email. If you need help filing a grievance, the Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you. You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave SW, Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD). Complaint forms are available at http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/notice/index.html.


Alaska residents: Contact the Alaska Division of Insurance via email at insurance@alaska.gov, or by phone at 907-269-7900 or 1-800-INSURAK (in-state, outside Anchorage).

Language Assistance

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711).


注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711)。


주의 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711) 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните 800-722-1471 (телетайп: 711).


MO LOU SILAFIA: Afaı e te taulata Gagan a fä Sàmôoa, o loo iaai auanaun fesoasoan, e fa fua e leai se togoti, mo oe, Telefoni mai: 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711).

Palette: คุณสามารถใช้งาน*>(&gt; ของ, สามารถใช้ภาษาของคุณได้, โปรดระบุ, ผู้มีสิทธิ์ใช้-containing. ในเบื้องหลัง, 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711).

注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の語音支援をご利用いただけます。800-722-1471 (TTY: 711)まで、お電話にてご連絡ください。


УБАГА! Якщо ви розмовляете українською мовою, ви можете звернутися до безкоштовної служби мовної підтримки. Телефонуйте за номером 800-722-1471 (телетайп: 711).


TA: Inilaa taati 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711) 'u waa xog. Xog


ATTENTION: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 800-722-1471 (ATS: 711).


توعی: اگر به زبان فارسی گفتگو می کنید، تسهیلات زبانی بیشتر را در یک مرکز فارسی می پذیرد. با 800-722-1471 (TTY: 711).

Premera Blue Cross is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association serving businesses and residents of Alaska and Washington State, excluding Clark County. 052493 (07-01-2021)