

Epidural Steroid and Facet Injections for Spinal Pain

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[Instructions for Use](#)

Table of Contents	Page
Application	1
Coverage Rationale	1
Definitions	2
Applicable Codes	3
Description of Services	15
Clinical Evidence	16
U.S. Food and Drug Administration	21
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	21
References	21
Policy History/Revision Information	23
Instructions for Use	23

Related Community Plan Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ablative Treatment for Spinal Pain Occipital Neuralgia and Headache Treatment
Commercial Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epidural Steroid and Facet Injections for Spinal Pain
Medicare Advantage Coverage Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain Management and Pain Rehabilitation

Application

This Medical Policy does not apply to the states listed below; refer to the state-specific policy/guideline, if noted:

State	Policy/Guideline
Kentucky	Epidural Steroid Injections for Spinal Pain (for Kentucky Only) Facet Joint Injections for Spinal Pain (for Kentucky Only)
Louisiana	Facet Injections for Spinal Pain (for Louisiana Only)
Nebraska	Epidural Steroid and Facet Injections for Spinal Pain (for Nebraska Only)
New Jersey	Epidural Steroid and Facet Injections for Spinal Pain (for New Jersey Only)
Tennessee	Epidural Steroid and Facet Injections for Spinal Pain (for Tennessee Only)

Coverage Rationale

Note: This policy addresses Epidural Steroid Injections of the lumbar spine only. The policy does not address Epidural Steroid Injections of the cervical or thoracic spine, nor does it address injections for obstetrical or surgical anesthetic. The policy addresses Facet Joint Injections of multiple sites and is not limited to Facet Joint Injections of the lumbar spine.

The following are proven and medically necessary:

- Epidural Steroid Injections (ESI) for treating lumbar radicular pain caused by spinal stenosis, disc herniation, degenerative changes in the vertebrae or for the short-term management of low back pain when the following criteria are met:
 - The pain is associated with symptoms of nerve root irritation and/or low back pain due to disc extrusions and/or contained herniations; and
 - The pain is unresponsive to Conservative Treatment, including but not limited to pharmacotherapy, exercise or physical therapy
- Diagnostic Facet Joint Injection (FJI) and/or facet nerve block (i.e., medical branch block) to localize the level of facet joint pain in persons with pain suspected to originate from a facet joint as based on clinical exam

The following are unproven and not medically necessary due to insufficient evidence of efficacy:

- The use of ultrasound guidance for ESIs and FJIs
- ESI for all other indications of the lumbar spine not included above
- Therapeutic Facet Joint Injection (FJI) and/or Facet Nerve Block (i.e., Medial Branch Block) for treating chronic spinal pain

Epidural Steroid Injection Limitations

- A maximum of three (3) ESI (regardless of level, location, or side) in a calendar year when criteria (indications for coverage) are met for each injection
- A session is defined as one date of service in which ESI(s) is performed
- A calendar year is defined as the 12-month period from January 1st to December 31st

Definitions

Acute Low Back Pain: Low back pain present for up to six weeks. The early acute phase is defined as less than two weeks and the late acute phase is defined as two to six weeks, secondary to the potential for delayed-recovery or risk phases for the development of chronic low back pain. Low back pain can occur on a recurring basis. If there has been complete recovery between episodes, it is considered acute recurrent. (Goertz et al. 2012)

Conservative Therapy: Consists of an appropriate combination of medication (for example, NSAIDs, analgesics, etc.) in addition to physical therapy, spinal manipulation therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or other interventions based on the individual's specific presentation, physical findings and imaging results. (AHRQ 2013; Qassem 2017; Summers 2013)

Epidural Steroid Injection (ESI): A nonsurgical treatment for managing radiculopathy caused by disc herniation or degenerative changes in the vertebrae such as spondylosis. Medication is injected directly into the epidural space. The injection may also include a local anesthetic. The goal of ESI is to reduce inflammation, relieve pain, improve function, and reduce the need for surgical intervention. (Hayes, 2018)

Facet Joint Injection (FJI): The injection of a local anesthetic and/or corticosteroid into the facet joint. A facet joint injection/block may be diagnostic (to determine whether the facet joint is the source of pain) and/or therapeutic (to relieve pain).

Facet Nerve Block: The injection of a local anesthetic and/or corticosteroid along the nerves supplying the facet joints. A facet nerve block may be diagnostic (to determine whether the facet joint is the source of pain) and/or therapeutic (to relieve pain).

Medial Branch Block: See *Facet Nerve Block*.

Facet Joint Injection (FJI): The injection of local anesthetic and possibly a corticosteroid in the facet joint capsule or along the nerves supplying the facet joints. Facet joint injections (sometimes called medial branch blocks) are commonly used to treat back pain and/or to help determine whether the facet joint is a source of pain. (ECRI, 2012)

Non-Radicular Back Pain: Pain which does not radiate along a dermatome (sensory distribution of a single root). Appropriate imaging does not reveal signs of spinal nerve root compression and there is no evidence of spinal nerve root compression seen on clinical exam. (Lenahan, 2018)

Radicular Back Pain: Pain which radiates from the spine into the extremity along the course of the spinal nerve root. The pain should follow the pattern of a dermatome associated with the irritated nerve root identified. (Lenahan, 2018)

Radiculopathy: Radiculopathy is characterized by pain which radiates from the spine to extend outward to cause symptoms away from the source of the spinal nerve root irritation. (Lenahan, 2018)

Sub-Acute Low Back Pain: Low back pain with duration of greater than six weeks after injury but no longer than 12 weeks after onset of symptoms. (Goertz et al. 2012)

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by federal, state, or contractual requirements and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

CPT Code	Description
0213T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, cervical or thoracic; single level
0214T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, cervical or thoracic; second level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
0215T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, cervical or thoracic; third and any additional level(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
0216T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, lumbar or sacral; single level
0217T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, lumbar or sacral; second level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
0218T	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with ultrasound guidance, lumbar or sacral; third and any additional level(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
Epidural	
62322	Injection(s), of diagnostic or therapeutic substance(s) (e.g., anesthetic, antispasmodic, opioid, steroid, other solution), not including neurolytic substances, including needle or catheter placement, interlaminar epidural or subarachnoid, lumbar or sacral (caudal); without imaging guidance
62323	Injection(s), of diagnostic or therapeutic substance(s) (e.g., anesthetic, antispasmodic, opioid, steroid, other solution), not including neurolytic substances, including needle or catheter placement, interlaminar epidural or subarachnoid, lumbar or sacral (caudal); with imaging guidance (i.e., fluoroscopy or CT)
64483	Injection(s), anesthetic agent(s) and/or steroid; transforaminal epidural, with imaging guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral, single level
64484	Injection(s), anesthetic agent(s) and/or steroid; transforaminal epidural, with imaging guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral, each additional level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
Facet	
64490	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), cervical or thoracic; single level
64491	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), cervical or thoracic; second level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
64492	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), cervical or thoracic; third and any additional level(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
64493	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral; single level

CPT Code	Description
Facet	
64494	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral; second level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
64495	Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral; third and any additional level(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

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Diagnosis Code	Description
Epidural	
E08.41	Diabetes mellitus due to underlying condition with diabetic mononeuropathy
E09.41	Drug or chemical induced diabetes mellitus with neurological complications with diabetic mononeuropathy
E10.41	Type 1 diabetes mellitus with diabetic mononeuropathy
E11.41	Type 2 diabetes mellitus with diabetic mononeuropathy
E13.41	Other specified diabetes mellitus with diabetic mononeuropathy
G54.1	Lumbosacral plexus disorders
G54.4	Lumbosacral root disorders, not elsewhere classified
G57.00	Lesion of sciatic nerve, unspecified lower limb
G57.01	Lesion of sciatic nerve, right lower limb
G57.02	Lesion of sciatic nerve, left lower limb
G57.03	Lesion of sciatic nerve, bilateral lower limbs
G57.70	Causalgia of unspecified lower limb
G57.71	Causalgia of right lower limb
G57.72	Causalgia of left lower limb
G57.73	Causalgia of bilateral lower limbs
G57.80	Other specified mononeuropathies of unspecified lower limb
G57.81	Other specified mononeuropathies of right lower limb
G57.82	Other specified mononeuropathies of left lower limb
G57.83	Other specified mononeuropathies of bilateral lower limbs
G57.90	Unspecified mononeuropathy of unspecified lower limb
G57.91	Unspecified mononeuropathy of right lower limb
G57.92	Unspecified mononeuropathy of left lower limb
G57.93	Unspecified mononeuropathy of bilateral lower limbs
G58.8	Other specified mononeuropathies
G58.9	Mononeuropathy, unspecified
G59	Mononeuropathy in diseases classified elsewhere
G90.50	Complex regional pain syndrome I, unspecified
G90.521	Complex regional pain syndrome I of right lower limb
G90.522	Complex regional pain syndrome I of left lower limb
G90.523	Complex regional pain syndrome I of lower limb, bilateral
G90.529	Complex regional pain syndrome I of unspecified lower limb
G90.59	Complex regional pain syndrome I of other specified site

Diagnosis Code	Description
Epidural	
M43.00	Spondylolysis, site unspecified
M43.01	Spondylolysis, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M43.02	Spondylolysis, cervical region
M43.03	Spondylolysis, cervicothoracic region
M43.04	Spondylolysis, thoracic region
M43.05	Spondylolysis, thoracolumbar region
M43.06	Spondylolysis, lumbar region
M43.07	Spondylolysis, lumbosacral region
M43.08	Spondylolysis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M43.09	Spondylolysis, multiple sites in spine
M43.10	Spondylolisthesis, site unspecified
M43.11	Spondylolisthesis, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M43.12	Spondylolisthesis, cervical region
M43.13	Spondylolisthesis, cervicothoracic region
M43.14	Spondylolisthesis, thoracic region
M43.15	Spondylolisthesis, thoracolumbar region
M43.16	Spondylolisthesis, lumbar region
M43.17	Spondylolisthesis, lumbosacral region
M43.18	Spondylolisthesis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M43.19	Spondylolisthesis, multiple sites in spine
M43.27	Fusion of spine, lumbosacral region
M43.28	Fusion of spine, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.16	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, lumbar region
M47.26	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, lumbar region
M47.27	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M47.28	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.816	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, lumbar region
M47.817	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M47.818	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.896	Other spondylosis, lumbar region
M47.897	Other spondylosis, lumbosacral region
M47.898	Other spondylosis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M48.00	Spinal stenosis, site unspecified
M48.061	Spinal stenosis, lumbar region without neurogenic claudication
M48.062	Spinal stenosis, lumbar region with neurogenic claudication
M48.07	Spinal stenosis, lumbosacral region
M48.08	Spinal stenosis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M51.06	Intervertebral disc disorders with myelopathy, lumbar region
M51.14	Intervertebral disc disorders with radiculopathy, thoracic region
M51.15	Intervertebral disc disorders with radiculopathy, thoracolumbar region
M51.16	Intervertebral disc disorders with radiculopathy, lumbar region

Diagnosis Code	Description
Epidural	
M51.17	Intervertebral disc disorders with radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M51.26	Other intervertebral disc displacement, lumbar region
M51.27	Other intervertebral disc displacement, lumbosacral region
M51.34	Other intervertebral disc degeneration, thoracic region
M51.35	Other intervertebral disc degeneration, thoracolumbar region
M51.36	Other intervertebral disc degeneration, lumbar region
M51.37	Other intervertebral disc degeneration, lumbosacral region
M51.46	Schmorl's nodes, lumbar region
M51.47	Schmorl's nodes, lumbosacral region
M51.9	Unspecified thoracic, thoracolumbar and lumbosacral intervertebral disc disorder
M53.2X7	Spinal instabilities, lumbosacral region
M53.2X8	Spinal instabilities, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M53.3	Sacrococcygeal disorders, not elsewhere classified
M53.86	Other specified dorsopathies, lumbar region
M53.87	Other specified dorsopathies, lumbosacral region
M53.88	Other specified dorsopathies, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M54.14	Radiculopathy, thoracic region
M54.15	Radiculopathy, thoracolumbar region
M54.16	Radiculopathy, lumbar region
M54.17	Radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M54.30	Sciatica, unspecified side
M54.31	Sciatica, right side
M54.32	Sciatica, left side
M54.40	Lumbago with sciatica, unspecified side
M54.41	Lumbago with sciatica, right side
M54.42	Lumbago with sciatica, left side
M96.1	Postlaminectomy syndrome, not elsewhere classified
M99.23	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of lumbar region
M99.24	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of sacral region
M99.25	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of pelvic region
M99.26	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of lower extremity
M99.27	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of upper extremity
M99.28	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of rib cage
M99.29	Subluxation stenosis of neural canal of abdomen and other regions
M99.33	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of lumbar region
M99.34	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of sacral region
M99.35	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of pelvic region
M99.36	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of lower extremity
M99.37	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of upper extremity
M99.38	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of rib cage
M99.39	Osseous stenosis of neural canal of abdomen and other regions

Diagnosis Code	Description
Epidural	
M99.43	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of lumbar region
M99.44	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of sacral region
M99.45	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of pelvic region
M99.46	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of lower extremity
M99.47	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of upper extremity
M99.48	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of rib cage
M99.49	Connective tissue stenosis of neural canal of abdomen and other regions
M99.53	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of lumbar region
M99.54	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of sacral region
M99.55	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of pelvic region
M99.56	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of lower extremity
M99.57	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of upper extremity
M99.58	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of rib cage
M99.59	Intervertebral disc stenosis of neural canal of abdomen and other regions
M99.63	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of lumbar region
M99.64	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of sacral region
M99.65	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of pelvic region
M99.66	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of lower extremity
M99.67	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of upper extremity
M99.68	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of rib cage
M99.69	Osseous and subluxation stenosis of intervertebral foramina of abdomen and other regions
M99.73	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of lumbar region
M99.74	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of sacral region
M99.75	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of pelvic region
M99.76	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of lower extremity
M99.77	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of upper extremity
M99.78	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of rib cage
M99.79	Connective tissue and disc stenosis of intervertebral foramina of abdomen and other regions
S24.2XXA	Injury of nerve root of thoracic spine, initial encounter
S32.000A	Wedge compression fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.001A	Stable burst fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.002A	Unstable burst fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.008A	Other fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.009A	Unspecified fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.010A	Wedge compression fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.011A	Stable burst fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.012A	Unstable burst fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.018A	Other fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.019A	Unspecified fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.020A	Wedge compression fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.021A	Stable burst fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Epidural	
S32.022A	Unstable burst fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.028A	Other fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.029A	Unspecified fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.030A	Wedge compression fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.031A	Stable burst fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.032A	Unstable burst fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.038A	Other fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.039A	Unspecified fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.040A	Wedge compression fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.041A	Stable burst fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.042A	Unstable burst fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.048A	Other fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.049A	Unspecified fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.050A	Wedge compression fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.051A	Stable burst fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.052A	Unstable burst fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.058A	Other fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.059A	Unspecified fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S34.21XA	Injury of nerve root of lumbar spine, initial encounter
S34.22XA	Injury of nerve root of sacral spine, initial encounter
S34.4XXA	Injury of lumbosacral plexus, initial encounter
S74.00XA	Injury of sciatic nerve at hip and thigh level, unspecified leg, initial encounter
S74.01XA	Injury of sciatic nerve at hip and thigh level, right leg, initial encounter
S74.02XA	Injury of sciatic nerve at hip and thigh level, left leg, initial encounter
Facet	
M12.88	Other specific arthropathies, not elsewhere classified, other specified site
M41.112	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, cervical region
M41.113	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, cervicothoracic region
M41.114	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, thoracic region
M41.115	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, thoracolumbar region
M41.116	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, lumbar region
M41.117	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, lumbosacral region
M41.119	Juvenile idiopathic scoliosis, site unspecified
M41.122	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, cervical region
M41.123	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, cervicothoracic region
M41.124	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, thoracic region
M41.125	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, thoracolumbar region
M41.126	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, lumbar region
M41.127	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, lumbosacral region
M41.129	Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, site unspecified
M41.20	Other idiopathic scoliosis, site unspecified

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
M41.22	Other idiopathic scoliosis, cervical region
M41.23	Other idiopathic scoliosis, cervicothoracic region
M41.24	Other idiopathic scoliosis, thoracic region
M41.25	Other idiopathic scoliosis, thoracolumbar region
M41.26	Other idiopathic scoliosis, lumbar region
M41.27	Other idiopathic scoliosis, lumbosacral region
M43.00	Spondylolysis, site unspecified
M43.01	Spondylolysis, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M43.02	Spondylolysis, cervical region
M43.03	Spondylolysis, cervicothoracic region
M43.04	Spondylolysis, thoracic region
M43.05	Spondylolysis, thoracolumbar region
M43.06	Spondylolysis, lumbar region
M43.07	Spondylolysis, lumbosacral region
M43.08	Spondylolysis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M43.09	Spondylolysis, multiple sites in spine
M43.10	Spondylolisthesis, site unspecified
M43.11	Spondylolisthesis, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M43.12	Spondylolisthesis, cervical region
M43.13	Spondylolisthesis, cervicothoracic region
M43.14	Spondylolisthesis, thoracic region
M43.15	Spondylolisthesis, thoracolumbar region
M43.16	Spondylolisthesis, lumbar region
M43.17	Spondylolisthesis, lumbosacral region
M43.18	Spondylolisthesis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M43.19	Spondylolisthesis, multiple sites in spine
M46.90	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, site unspecified
M46.91	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M46.92	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, cervical region
M46.93	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, cervicothoracic region
M46.94	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, thoracic region
M46.95	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, thoracolumbar region
M46.96	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, lumbar region
M46.97	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, lumbosacral region
M46.98	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M46.99	Unspecified inflammatory spondylopathy, multiple sites in spine
M47.011	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.012	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, cervical region
M47.013	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, cervicothoracic region
M47.014	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, thoracic region
M47.015	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, thoracolumbar region

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
M47.016	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, lumbar region
M47.019	Anterior spinal artery compression syndromes, site unspecified
M47.021	Vertebral artery compression syndromes, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.022	Vertebral artery compression syndromes, cervical region
M47.029	Vertebral artery compression syndromes, site unspecified
M47.11	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.12	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, cervical region
M47.13	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, cervicothoracic region
M47.14	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, thoracic region
M47.15	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, thoracolumbar region
M47.16	Other spondylosis with myelopathy, lumbar region
M47.20	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, site unspecified
M47.21	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.22	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, cervical region
M47.23	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, cervicothoracic region
M47.24	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, thoracic region
M47.25	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, thoracolumbar region
M47.26	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, lumbar region
M47.27	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M47.28	Other spondylosis with radiculopathy, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.811	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.812	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, cervical region
M47.813	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, cervicothoracic region
M47.814	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, thoracic region
M47.815	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, thoracolumbar region
M47.816	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, lumbar region
M47.817	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, lumbosacral region
M47.818	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.819	Spondylosis without myelopathy or radiculopathy, site unspecified
M47.891	Other spondylosis, occipito-atlanto-axial region
M47.892	Other spondylosis, cervical region
M47.893	Other spondylosis, cervicothoracic region
M47.894	Other spondylosis, thoracic region
M47.895	Other spondylosis, thoracolumbar region
M47.896	Other spondylosis, lumbar region
M47.897	Other spondylosis, lumbosacral region
M47.898	Other spondylosis, sacral and sacrococcygeal region
M47.899	Other spondylosis, site unspecified
M47.9	Spondylosis, unspecified
M48.50XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, site unspecified, initial encounter for fracture
M48.51XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, occipito-atlanto-axial region, initial encounter for fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
M48.52XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, cervical region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.53XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, cervicothoracic region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.54XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, thoracic region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.55XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, thoracolumbar region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.56XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, lumbar region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.57XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, lumbosacral region, initial encounter for fracture
M48.58XA	Collapsed vertebra, not elsewhere classified, sacral and sacrococcygeal region, initial encounter for fracture
M51.26	Other intervertebral disc displacement, lumbar region
M51.27	Other intervertebral disc displacement, lumbosacral region
M80.0AXA	Age-related osteoporosis with current pathological fracture, other site, initial encounter for fracture
M80.08XA	Age-related osteoporosis with current pathological fracture, vertebra(e), initial encounter for fracture
M80.8AXA	Other osteoporosis with current pathological fracture, other site, initial encounter for fracture
M80.88XA	Other osteoporosis with current pathological fracture, vertebra(e), initial encounter for fracture
M84.48XA	Pathological fracture, other site, initial encounter for fracture
M84.58XA	Pathological fracture in neoplastic disease, other specified site, initial encounter for fracture
M84.68XA	Pathological fracture in other disease, other site, initial encounter for fracture
M96.1	Postlaminectomy syndrome, not elsewhere classified
S12.000A	Unspecified displaced fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.001A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.01XA	Stable burst fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.02XA	Unstable burst fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.030A	Displaced posterior arch fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.031A	Nondisplaced posterior arch fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.040A	Displaced lateral mass fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.041A	Nondisplaced lateral mass fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.090A	Other displaced fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.091A	Other nondisplaced fracture of first cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.100A	Unspecified displaced fracture of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.101A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.110A	Anterior displaced Type II dens fracture, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.111A	Posterior displaced Type II dens fracture, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.112A	Nondisplaced Type II dens fracture, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.120A	Other displaced dens fracture, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.121A	Other nondisplaced dens fracture, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.130A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.131A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.14XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
S12.150A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.151A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.190A	Other displaced fracture of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.191A	Other nondisplaced fracture of second cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.200A	Unspecified displaced fracture of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.201A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.230A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.231A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.24XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.250A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.251A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.290A	Other displaced fracture of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.291A	Other nondisplaced fracture of third cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.300A	Unspecified displaced fracture of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.301A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.330A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.331A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.34XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.350A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.351A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.390A	Other displaced fracture of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.391A	Other nondisplaced fracture of fourth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.400A	Unspecified displaced fracture of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.401A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.430A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.431A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.44XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.450A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.451A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.490A	Other displaced fracture of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.491A	Other nondisplaced fracture of fifth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
S12.500A	Unspecified displaced fracture of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.501A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.530A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.531A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.54XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.550A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.551A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.590A	Other displaced fracture of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.591A	Other nondisplaced fracture of sixth cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.600A	Unspecified displaced fracture of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.601A	Unspecified nondisplaced fracture of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.630A	Unspecified traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.631A	Unspecified traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.64XA	Type III traumatic spondylolisthesis of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.650A	Other traumatic displaced spondylolisthesis of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.651A	Other traumatic nondisplaced spondylolisthesis of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.690A	Other displaced fracture of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.691A	Other nondisplaced fracture of seventh cervical vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S12.9XXA	Fracture of neck, unspecified, initial encounter
S22.000A	Wedge compression fracture of unspecified thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.001A	Stable burst fracture of unspecified thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.002A	Unstable burst fracture of unspecified thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.008A	Other fracture of unspecified thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.009A	Unspecified fracture of unspecified thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.010A	Wedge compression fracture of first thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.011A	Stable burst fracture of first thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.012A	Unstable burst fracture of first thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.018A	Other fracture of first thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.019A	Unspecified fracture of first thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.020A	Wedge compression fracture of second thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.021A	Stable burst fracture of second thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.022A	Unstable burst fracture of second thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.028A	Other fracture of second thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.029A	Unspecified fracture of second thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.030A	Wedge compression fracture of third thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
S22.031A	Stable burst fracture of third thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.032A	Unstable burst fracture of third thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.038A	Other fracture of third thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.039A	Unspecified fracture of third thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.040A	Wedge compression fracture of fourth thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.041A	Stable burst fracture of fourth thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.042A	Unstable burst fracture of fourth thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.048A	Other fracture of fourth thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.049A	Unspecified fracture of fourth thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.050A	Wedge compression fracture of T5-T6 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.051A	Stable burst fracture of T5-T6 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.052A	Unstable burst fracture of T5-T6 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.058A	Other fracture of T5-T6 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.059A	Unspecified fracture of T5-T6 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.060A	Wedge compression fracture of T7-T8 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.061A	Stable burst fracture of T7-T8 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.062A	Unstable burst fracture of T7-T8 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.068A	Other fracture of T7-T8 thoracic vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.069A	Unspecified fracture of T7-T8 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.070A	Wedge compression fracture of T9-T10 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.071A	Stable burst fracture of T9-T10 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.072A	Unstable burst fracture of T9-T10 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.078A	Other fracture of T9-T10 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.079A	Unspecified fracture of T9-T10 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.080A	Wedge compression fracture of T11-T12 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.081A	Stable burst fracture of T11-T12 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.082A	Unstable burst fracture of T11-T12 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.088A	Other fracture of T11-T12 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S22.089A	Unspecified fracture of T11-T12 vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.000A	Wedge compression fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.001A	Stable burst fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.002A	Unstable burst fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.008A	Other fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.009A	Unspecified fracture of unspecified lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.010A	Wedge compression fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.011A	Stable burst fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.012A	Unstable burst fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.018A	Other fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.019A	Unspecified fracture of first lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.020A	Wedge compression fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.021A	Stable burst fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture

Diagnosis Code	Description
Facet	
S32.022A	Unstable burst fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.028A	Other fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.029A	Unspecified fracture of second lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.030A	Wedge compression fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.031A	Stable burst fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.032A	Unstable burst fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.038A	Other fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.039A	Unspecified fracture of third lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.040A	Wedge compression fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.041A	Stable burst fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.042A	Unstable burst fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.048A	Other fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.049A	Unspecified fracture of fourth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.050A	Wedge compression fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.051A	Stable burst fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.052A	Unstable burst fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.058A	Other fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.059A	Unspecified fracture of fifth lumbar vertebra, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.10XA	Unspecified fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.110A	Nondisplaced Zone I fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.111A	Minimally displaced Zone I fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.112A	Severely displaced Zone I fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.119A	Unspecified Zone I fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.120A	Nondisplaced Zone II fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.121A	Minimally displaced Zone II fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.122A	Severely displaced Zone II fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.129A	Unspecified Zone II fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.130A	Nondisplaced Zone III fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.131A	Minimally displaced Zone III fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.132A	Severely displaced Zone III fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.139A	Unspecified Zone III fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.14XA	Type 1 fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.15XA	Type 2 fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.16XA	Type 3 fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.17XA	Type 4 fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.19XA	Other fracture of sacrum, initial encounter for closed fracture
S32.2XXA	Fracture of coccyx, initial encounter for closed fracture

Description of Services

Pain in the lower back is a common concern, affecting up to 90% of Americans at some point in their lifetime. The vast majority of episodes are mild and self-limited. (Chronic nonmalignant back pain is defined as pain lasting 3-6 months or more that is not

due to cancer). Up to 50% of affected persons will have more than one episode. Low back pain is not a specific disease; rather it is a symptom that may occur from a variety of different processes, including but not limited to spinal stenosis, disc herniation or degenerative changes in the vertebrae. Management of back pain that is persistent and disabling despite the use of recommended conservative treatment is challenging. Epidural steroid injections, and facet joint injections and blocks are among the treatments that have been employed in the treatment of back pain as an alternative to more invasive interventions. (Hayes, 2018)

Facet blocks can be considered a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure. Facet blocks using short-acting local anesthetics can be used to diagnose facet (zygapophyseal) joint syndrome as the cause of chronic back pain. Facet blocks utilizing long acting local anesthetics, anti-inflammatory agents such as corticosteroids, or nerve ablating techniques such as radiofrequency lesioning have been investigated for treatment of chronic back pain attributed to facet joint syndrome. (Hayes, 2018)

Epidural steroid injection (ESI) is a nonsurgical treatment for managing low back pain and sciatica caused by disc herniation or degenerative changes in the vertebrae. An epidural steroid injection is an injection of long-lasting steroid in the epidural space; that is the area which surrounds the spinal cord and the nerves coming out of it. The goal of ESI is to relieve pain, improve function, and reduce the need for surgical intervention. (Hayes, 2007; Archived 2018)

Clinical Evidence

Ultrasound Guidance

There is no evidence in the peer-reviewed literature regarding the overall health benefit of the use of ultrasonic guidance during spinal injections over the use of fluoroscopy or CT-guidance.

Wu et al (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of controlled trials (randomized and non-randomized) to assess the comparative effectiveness of ultrasound-guided (USG) versus computed tomography (CT) e/fluoroscopy-guided lumbar facet joint injections in adults. Databases were searched for controlled trials comparing the clinical effectiveness between USG and CT/fluoroscopy-guided injection techniques in patients with facet syndrome were included. Two reviewers independently screened abstracts and full texts. The results of the mean procedure duration, decreased pain score, and Modified Oswestry Disability score after treatment were extracted and presented in the form of mean. Of 103 records screened, 3 studies were included, with a total of 202 adults with facet joint pain. There was no statistically significant difference between the 2 groups in pain score and Modified Oswestry Disability score after injection. There was also no statistically significant difference in the mean procedure duration between the 2 groups. The authors concluded that while USG injection is feasible and minimizes exposure of radiation to patients and practitioners in the lumbar facet joint injection process. This review suggested no significant differences in pain and functional improvement were noted between the USG and CT-/fluoroscopy-guided techniques in facet joint injection.

Facet Injections

There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that therapeutic facet joint injections are effective in the treatment of back pain, evidence of the safety and efficacy of therapeutic facet joint injections for low back pain is lacking and of low quality. Evidence for the use of facet injection for diagnostic purpose presented in this section and support the proven coverage rationale.

A Hayes technology report (2018) stated that low-quality body of evidence from RCTs of lumbar facet joint injections (FJIs) shows that this technique may provide a significant degree of pain relief and improve function/disability (ODI) compared with baseline levels in patients with chronic nonresponsive spinal pain in that region. However, the duration of pain relief is variable, with follow-up of 3 to 6 months. The lack of appropriate placebo control groups in the RCTs precluded an accurate assessment of the treatment effect of the intervention; thus, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the magnitude and durability of benefit. Additional studies are needed to evaluate the long-term efficacy and safety of therapeutic FJIs versus placebo for treatment of chronic lumbar spinal pain, and to assess the comparative effectiveness of this treatment versus definitive alternatives.

Manchikanti et al (2016) conducted a systematic evidence-based assessment methodology of controlled trials of diagnostic validity and randomized controlled trials to investigate the diagnostic validity and therapeutic value of lumbar facet joint interventions in managing chronic low back pain. The literature search was extensive utilizing various types of electronic search media, and inclusion criteria encompassed all facet joint interventions performed in a controlled fashion. Across all databases, 16 high quality diagnostic accuracy studies were identified, and multiple studies assessed the influence of multiple factors on

diagnostic validity. In contrast to diagnostic validity studies, therapeutic efficacy trials were limited to a total of 14 randomized controlled trials, assessing the efficacy of intraarticular injections, facet or zygapophysial joint nerve blocks, and radiofrequency neurotomy of the innervation of the facet joints. The pain relief of greater than 50% was the outcome measure for diagnostic accuracy assessment of the controlled studies with ability to perform previously painful movements, whereas, for randomized controlled therapeutic efficacy studies, the primary outcome was significant pain relief and the secondary outcome was a positive change in functional status. For the inclusion of the diagnostic controlled studies, all studies must have utilized either placebo-controlled facet joint blocks or comparative local anesthetic blocks. In assessing therapeutic interventions, short-term and long-term reliefs were defined as either up to 6 mo or greater than 6 mo of relief. The evidence for the diagnostic validity of lumbar facet joint nerve blocks with at least 75% pain relief with ability to perform previously painful movements was level I, based on a range of level I to V derived from a best evidence synthesis. For therapeutic interventions, the evidence was variable from level II to III, with level II evidence for lumbar facet joint nerve blocks and radiofrequency neurotomy for long-term improvement (greater than 6 mo), and level III evidence for lumbosacral zygapophysial joint injections for short-term improvement only. The authors concluded that this review provides significant evidence for the diagnostic validity of facet joint nerve blocks, and moderate evidence for therapeutic radiofrequency neurotomy and therapeutic facet joint nerve blocks in managing chronic low back pain.

Vekaria et al (2016). Evidence supporting the use of therapeutic intra-articular facet joint injections for patients with suspected facet joint pain is sparse. The authors conducted a systematic review, including a narrative synthesis to determine if intra-articular facet joint injections with active drug are more effective in reducing back pain and back pain-related disability than a sham procedure or a placebo/inactive injection. The authors also evaluated if intra-articular facet joint injections with active drug or placebo/inactive injection are more effective in reducing back pain and back pain-related disability than conservative treatment. Electronic databases were searched through April 2015. Data were screened and single extraction with independent verification and risk of bias assessment was performed. A total of 391 records were screened, and six trials were included. The trials included were small (range 18-109 participants) and overall in terms of pain and disability outcomes most were inconclusive. Only two of the trials report any significant between-group differences in pain or disability outcomes. The authors addressed limitations and flaws in these trials that were clinically diverse and precluded any meta-analysis. A number of methodological issues were identified. The positive results are interpreted with caution and suggest that there is a need for further high-quality work in this area. Further randomized controlled trials of higher methodological standard comparing facet joint injection with a sham/placebo control or conservative treatment are needed from which to base any conclusion on the effectiveness of facet joints in improving pain and disability outcomes.

Manchikanti et al. (2010a) conducted a double-blind randomized controlled trial of facet joint nerve blocks to manage chronic low back pain. One hundred twenty patients were equally randomized to receive either a local anesthetic only (group I) or a local anesthetic mixed with a steroid (group II). Outcomes were measured at baseline, 3, 6, 12, 18 and 24 months post-treatment with the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), the Oswestry Disability Index 2.0 (ODI), work status, and opioid intake. Significant pain relief ($\geq 50\%$) and functional improvement of $\geq 40\%$ were observed in 85% in Group 1, and 90% in Group II, at 2-year follow-up. The authors found that both groups had equal relief with or without the addition of steroids to the treatment.

In a prospective, randomized, double-blind trial by Manchikanti et al. (2007), data from a total of 60 patients were included, with 15 patients in each of 4 groups. Thirty patients were in a non-steroid group consisting of Groups I (control, with lumbar facet joint nerve blocks using bupivacaine) and II (with lumbar facet joint nerve blocks using bupivacaine and Sarapin); another 30 patients were in a steroid group consisting of Groups III (with lumbar facet joint nerve blocks using bupivacaine and steroids) and IV (with lumbar facet joint nerve blocks using bupivacaine, Sarapin, and steroids). Significant improvement in pain and functional status were observed at 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months, compared to baseline measurements. The average number of treatments for 1 year was 3.7 with no significant differences among the groups. Duration of average pain relief with each procedure was 14.8 +/- 7.9 weeks in the non-steroid group and 12.5 +/- 3.3 weeks in the steroid group, with no significant differences among the groups. Therapeutic lumbar facet joint nerve blocks with local anesthetic, with or without Sarapin or steroids, may be effective in the treatment of chronic low back pain of facet joint origin.

Professional Societies

American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS)

Guidelines addressing spinal injections and other therapeutic technologies used in the management of chronic low-back pain, state that facet injections are not recommended as long-term treatment for chronic low-back pain. The author's further state

that no evidence exists to support the effectiveness of facet injections in the treatment of patients with chronic low-back pain. (Resnick et al. 2005).

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM)

Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines published in 2008 by the ACOEM considered interventions and practices used in the treatment of low back disorders, including various injection therapies and techniques. The guidelines state that therapeutic facet joint injections for acute, sub-acute, chronic low back pain or radicular pain syndrome are not recommended.

American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP)

The ASIPP published updated evidence-based guidelines regarding interventional techniques in the management of chronic spinal pain in 2013. The authors concluded that based upon the available evidence, therapeutic intra-articular facet joint injections were not recommended. (Manchikanti et al.).

North American Spine Society (NASS)

In 2020, NASS published coverage policy recommendations for therapeutic facet joint interventions. They concluded that therapeutic facet joint (medical branch blocks) are not recommended in the treatment of back pain.

Epidural Steroid Injections

Overall, the evidence for the use of diagnostic and therapeutic injections in the treatment of acute and chronic back pain is large. Clinical studies have demonstrated that epidural steroid injections have provided short-term improvement and may be considered in the treatment of selected patients with radicular pain as part of an active therapy program. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that epidural steroid injections are effective in the treatment of back pain in the absence of radicular symptoms.

Smith et al (2019) published the results of a systematic review of 19 studies assessing the efficacy of lumbar transforaminal steroid injection for radicular pain due to lumbar disc herniation. Placebo controlled RCTs, pragmatic studies, and observational studies were included in the analysis. Utilizing a threshold of $\geq 50\%$ reduction in pain, treatment success rates across studies were 63% (Range: 58 to 68%) at 1-month, 74% (Range: 68-80%) at 3-months, 64% (59-69%) at 6-months, and 64% (57-71%) at 1 year. The authors concluded that there is strong evidence that lumbar transforaminal injection of steroids is an effective treatment for radicular pain due to disc herniation.

Manchikanti et al (2014) sought to assess the effectiveness of transforaminal epidural injections of local anesthetic with or without steroids in managing chronic low back and lower extremity pain in patients with disc herniation and radiculitis. One hundred twenty patients were randomly assigned to 2 groups: Group I received 1.5 mL of 1% preservative-free lidocaine, followed by 0.5 mL of sodium chloride solution. Group II received 1% lidocaine, followed by 3 mg, or 0.5 mL of betamethasone. The sodium chloride solution and betamethasone were either clear liquids or were provided in opaque-covered syringes. The primary outcome measure was significant improvement (at least 50%) measured by the average Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) and the Oswestry Disability Index 2.0 (ODI). Secondary outcome measures were employment status and opioid intake. At 2 years there was significant improvement in all participants in 65% who received local anesthetic alone and 57% who received local anesthetic and steroid. When separated into non-responsive and responsive categories based on initial relief of at least 3 weeks with 2 procedures, significant improvement (at least 50% improvement in pain and function) was seen in 80% in the local anesthetic group and 73% in the local anesthetic with steroid group. Presumed limitations of this evaluation include the lack of a placebo group. The authors concluded transforaminal epidural injections of local anesthetic with or without steroids might be an effective therapy for patients with disc herniation or radiculitis. The present evidence illustrates the lack of superiority of steroids compared with local anesthetic at 2-year follow-up.

Friedly et al (2014) reported that rigorous data are lacking regarding the effectiveness and safety of epidural glucocorticoid injections for the treatment of lumbar spinal stenosis. In a double-blind, multisite trial, the authors randomly assigned 400 patients who had lumbar central spinal stenosis and moderate-to-severe leg pain and disability to receive epidural injections of glucocorticoids plus lidocaine or lidocaine alone. The patients received one or two injections before the primary outcome evaluation, performed 6 weeks after randomization and the first injection. The primary outcomes were the score on the Roland-Morris Disability Questionnaire (RMDQ, in which scores range from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating greater physical disability) and the rating of the intensity of leg pain (on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating no pain and 10 indicating "pain as bad as you can imagine"). At 6 weeks, there were no significant between-group differences in the RMDQ score (adjusted

difference in the average treatment effect between the glucocorticoid-lidocaine group and the lidocaine-alone group, -1.0 points; 95% confidence interval [CI], -2.1 to 0.1) or the intensity of leg pain (adjusted difference in the average treatment effect, -0.2 points; 95% CI, -0.8 to 0.4). A prespecified secondary subgroup analysis with stratification according to type of injection (interlaminar vs. transforaminal) likewise showed no significant differences at 6 weeks. The authors concluded in the treatment of lumbar spinal stenosis, epidural injection of glucocorticoids plus lidocaine offered minimal or no short-term benefit as compared with epidural injection of lidocaine alone.

Manchicanti et al. (2010b) conducted a double-blind randomized controlled trial of interlaminar epidural steroid injections, with and without steroids, in managing chronic pain of lumbar disc herniation or radiculitis. Seventy patients were equally randomized to receive either a local anesthetic only (group I) or a local anesthetic mixed with a steroid (group II). Outcomes were measured at baseline, 3, 6, and 12 months post-treatment with the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS), the Oswestry Disability Index 2.0 (ODI), employment status, and opioid intake. Significant pain relief ($\geq 50\%$) was seen at 12 months in 74% of patients in group I and 86% in group II, and 69% and 83% in ODI scores respectively. Patients in group II also had more improvement in functional status at 12 months (83% vs. 69%) and required less opioid intake.

Novak and Nemeth (2008) conducted a literature review to evaluate the effect of repeat epidural injections and/or the timing of injections to treat low back pain. Of the 91 articles identified, 15 were included in the review. The authors found little evidence to suggest that repeat epidural steroid injections are beneficial. The authors also found little evidence to suggest guidelines for frequency and timing of epidural steroid injections. The authors suggest that further studies with at least a 1-year follow-up are necessary to evaluate the timing and number of repeat injections.

Cyteval et al. (2006) prospectively followed 229 patients with lumbar radiculopathy (herniated disc and degenerative lesions) at 2 weeks and 1 year after percutaneous periradicular (transforaminal) steroid infiltration. The aim of the study was to find predictive factors of efficacy of the steroid injection procedure. ESIs were performed under fluoroscopic guidance, and periradicular flow was confirmed with contrast medium. Short- and long-term pain relief was demonstrated. The only predictive factor of pain relief was symptom duration before the procedure. The authors concluded that periradicular (transforaminal) infiltration was a simple, safe, and effective (short- and long-term relief) nonsurgical procedure with an improved benefit when performed early in the course of the illness. The primary limitation of the study was the lack of a control group.

Epidural steroid injections should not be performed at the site of congenital anatomic anomalies or in persons who have had previous surgery in which the epidural space is absent, altered, or eliminated. The treatment is contraindicated in patients with systemic infections or bleeding tendencies; infection at the injection site; patients undergoing active anticoagulation therapy; patients at risk for medical decompensation from fluid retention, such as those with severe congestive heart failure or poorly controlled hypertension; and patients with other unstable medical conditions. Steroid injections may lower resistance to infection and should be used with caution in patients with poorly controlled diabetes, since the corticosteroid injection may transiently increase the blood glucose levels. In addition, fluoroscopy should not be used to guide epidural injections for pregnant women to avoid radiation exposure of the fetus. (McLain, 2005)

Complications associated with epidural injections include steroid side effects, dural puncture, transient increased pain, transient paresthesias, aseptic and/or bacterial meningitis, neurological dysfunction or damage, epidural abscess, intracranial air, allergic reaction, epidural hematoma, persistent dural leak, nausea, headache, paraplegia, tetraplegia, seizure, stroke, and death. (Everett, 2004)

Professional Societies/Technology Assessments

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Technology Assessment Program

The 2015 AHRQ comparative effectiveness study on injection therapies for low back pain (LBP) concluded that ESIs for radiculopathy were associated with immediate improvements in pain and might be associated with immediate improvements in function, but benefits were small and not sustained, and there was no effect on long-term risk of surgery. Evidence did not suggest that effectiveness varies based on injection technique, corticosteroid, dose, or comparator. Limited evidence suggested that epidural corticosteroid injections are not effective for spinal stenosis or nonradicular back pain.

American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)

As of 2010, the ASA has not issued a statement specifically on the use of epidural steroids for the management of low back pain and/or sciatica. However, the ASA Task Force on Pain Management issued more general practice guidelines for chronic

pain management. The 2010 ASA guidelines recommended that: Epidural steroid injections with or without local anesthetics may be used as part of a multimodal treatment regimen to provide pain relief in selected patients with radicular pain or radiculopathy. Transforaminal epidural injections should be performed with appropriate image guidance to confirm correct needle position and spread of contrast before injecting a therapeutic substance.

American Academy of Neurology (AAN)

In 2007 (Armon, 2007), the Therapeutics and Technology Assessment Subcommittee of the AAN released an assessment addressing the use of epidural steroid injections (ESIs) to treat radicular lumbosacral pain:

- Epidural steroid injections may result in some improvement in radicular lumbosacral pain when determined between 2 and 6 weeks following the injection, compared to control treatment (Level C, Class I to III evidence). The average magnitude of effect is small, and the generalizability of the observation is limited by the small number of studies, limited to highly selected patient populations, the few techniques and doses studied, and variable comparison treatments.
- In general, epidural steroid injections for radicular lumbosacral pain have shown no impact on average impairment of function, on need for surgery, or on long-term pain relief beyond 3 months. Their routine use for these indications is not recommended (Level B, Class I to III evidence).
- Data on use of epidural steroid injections to treat cervical radicular pain are inadequate to make any recommendation (Level U).

American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP)

The ASIPP published updated evidence-based guidelines regarding interventional techniques in the management of chronic spinal pain in 2013 (Manchikanti et al.). The ASIPP maintains a comprehensive guideline for epidural steroid injections including indications, limitations and therapy frequencies.

American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons

A guideline from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons states:

- There is no meaningful evidence in the medical literature that the use of epidural injections is of any long-term value in the treatment of patients with chronic low-back pain. The literature does indicate that the use of lumbar epidural injections can provide short-term relief in selected patients with chronic low-back pain.
(Resnick, 2005)

North American Spine Society (NASS)

In 2020, NASS revised its coverage policy recommendations for epidural steroid injections and selective spinal nerve blocks. They stated that the rationale for coverage is based on high-level evidence and what most practitioners would consider to be accepted practice patterns. Multiple randomized-controlled trials (RCTs) have demonstrated that lumbar epidural steroid injections (LESIs) are effective in the treatment of lumbar radiculitis caused by disc herniation. There is sufficient literature to suggest that a trial of ESIs for radicular pain caused by conditions other than disc herniation is appropriate prior to considering surgical intervention.

In 2011, NASS revised its clinical guidelines for multidisciplinary spine care diagnosis and treatment of degenerative lumbar spinal stenosis with the following recommendation: that while there is evidence that nonfluoroscopically guided interlaminar and single radiographically guided transforaminal ESIs can result in short-term symptom relief in patients with neurogenic claudication or radiculopathy, there is conflicting evidence concerning long-term efficacy. The guidelines also note that there is some evidence that a multiple injection regimen of radiographically guided transforaminal ESIs or caudal injections can produce long-term relief of pain in patients with radiculopathy or neurogenic intermittent claudication from lumbar spinal stenosis. However, the evidence is of relatively poor quality, and therefore no strong recommendation in support of this therapy was made.

Similarly, in 2013 NASS published a Review and Recommendation Statement entitled Lumbar Transforaminal Epidural Steroid Injections. A grade A recommendation (defined as good evidence) was given for the effectiveness of ESI at treating radicular pain related to lumbar disc herniation for at least 1 month in more than 50% of individuals. The review graded the evidence as insufficient for a recommendation to treat lumbar radicular pain in the presence of stenosis. There was insufficient evidence to provide an evidence-based recommendation on the maximum number of lumbar ESIs that are appropriate in any given timeframe or the amount of pain/functional improvement needed to justify repeat injections.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

This section is to be used for informational purposes only. FDA approval alone is not a basis for coverage.

Epidural Steroid Injection is a procedure and, therefore, not subject to FDA regulation. However, any medical devices, drugs, biologics, or tests used as a part of this procedure may be subject to FDA regulation. Injectable corticosteroids include methylprednisolone, hydrocortisone, triamcinolone, betamethasone, and dexamethasone, and are approved by the FDA, however, the effectiveness and safety of the drugs for Epidural Steroid Injection have not been established, and FDA has not approved corticosteroids for such use.

In April 2014, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned, that injection of corticosteroids into the epidural space of the spine may result in rare but serious adverse events, including loss of vision, stroke, paralysis, and death. They noted the effectiveness and safety of epidural administration of corticosteroids have not been established, and the FDA has not approved corticosteroids for this use. FDA is requiring the addition of a warning to the drug labels of injectable corticosteroids to describe these risks. The FDA recommends that individuals should discuss the benefits and risks of epidural corticosteroid injections with their health care professionals, along with the benefits and risks associated with other possible treatments.

Additional information may be obtained from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration – Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) at: <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/fda-organization/center-drug-evaluation-and-research-cder>. (Accessed March 9, 2020)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Medicare does not have a National Coverage Determination (NCD) for epidural steroid injections (ESIs) used to treat spinal pain. Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) exist; refer to the LCDs for [Category III CPT® Codes, Epidural, Epidural Injections for Pain Management, Lumbar Epidural Injections, Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injections \(ESI\), Non-Covered Category III CPT Codes, Noncovered Services](#) and [Services That Are Not Reasonable and Necessary](#).

Medicare does not have an NCD for facet injections used to treat spinal pain. LCDs exist; refer to the LCDs for [Category III CPT® Codes, Epidural Injections for Pain Management, Facet Joint Injections, Medial Branch Blocks, and Facet Joint Radiofrequency Neurotomy, Facet Joint Interventions for Pain Management, Non-Covered Category III CPT Codes, Noncovered Services, Paravertebral Facet Joint Blocks](#) and [Services That Are Not Reasonable and Necessary](#). (Accessed January 29, 2020)

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Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
02/01/2021	Application <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reformatted contentAdded language to indicate this policy does not apply to the state of Kentucky; refer to the state-specific policy version
01/01/2021	Applicable Codes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Updated list of applicable CPT codes for Epidural to reflect annual edits:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Removed 0230T and 0231TRevised description for 64483 and 64484 Supporting Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">Archived previous policy version CS039.P

Instructions for Use

This Medical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage must be referenced as the terms of the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage may differ from the standard benefit plan. In the event of a conflict, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage govern. Before using this policy, please check the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Medical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

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