

MLN Matters Number: MM3339

Related Change Request (CR) #: 3339

Related CR Release Date: June 18, 2004

Effective Date: April 1, 2004

Related CR Transmittal #: 15

Implementation Date: April 1, 2004

Note: This article was updated on April 5, 2013, to reflect current Web addresses. All other information remains unchanged.

NCD: Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Test (sNCTs)

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, suppliers, and providers billing Medicare for Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Tests.

Provider Action Needed



STOP – Impact to You

This instruction reaffirms the existing Medicare non-coverage policy on any type of Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Test (sNCT), and the devices used to perform the test, to diagnose sensory neuropathies or radiculopathies.



CAUTION – What You Need to Know

This instruction constitutes a technical correction to previously issued Change Request (CR) 2988. CR2988, which was issued on March 19, 2004, should be discarded and replaced with this instruction.



GO – What You Need to Do

Refer to the *Background* and *Additional Information* sections below for full details on this requirement.

Background

As a result of reconsideration, this instruction reaffirms the existing Medicare non-coverage policy on any type of Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Test (sNCT), and the device(s) used to perform the test, to diagnose sensory neuropathies or radiculopathies.

Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

The revision to Section 160.23 of Pub. 100-03 is a National Coverage Determination (NCD). NCDs are binding on all Medicare carriers, fiscal intermediaries, quality improvement organizations, health maintenance organizations, competitive medical plans, and health care prepayment plans. Under 42 CFR 422.256(b), an NCD that expands coverage is also binding on a Medicare Advantage Organizations. In addition, an administrative law judge may not review an NCD. (See the Social Security Act, Section 1869(f)(1)(A)(i))

Note that this instruction constitutes a technical correction to previously issued Change Request (CR) 2988. CR2988 should be discarded and replaced with this instruction.

Related Instructions

The updated manual instructions are also included in the official instruction issued to your carrier, and it can be found by going to <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R15NCD.pdf> on the CMS website.

If you have any questions, please contact your carrier/intermediary at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Monitoring-Programs/provider-compliance-interactive-map/index.html> on the CMS website.

Additional Information

The following is the revision to the Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual, Pub. 100-03, Chapter 1 (Coverage Determinations), Section 160 (Nervous System), Subsection 160.23 (Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Tests (sNCTs)). Revised sections are ***bolded and italicized***.

Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual

Chapter 1 - Coverage Determinations

160 - Nervous System

160.23 - Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Tests (sNCTs)

160.23 - Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Tests (sNCTs)

A. General

Sensory Nerve Conduction Threshold Tests (sNCT) is a psychophysical assessment of both central and peripheral nerve functions. It measures the detection threshold of accurately calibrated sensory stimuli. This procedure is intended to evaluate and quantify function in both large and small caliber fibers for the purpose of detecting neurologic disease. Sensory perception and threshold detection are dependent on the integrity of both the peripheral sensory apparatus and peripheral-central sensory pathways. In theory, an abnormality detected by this procedure may signal dysfunction anywhere in the sensory pathway from the receptors, the sensory tracts, the primary sensory cortex, to the association cortex.

This procedure is different and distinct from assessment of nerve conduction velocity, amplitude and latency. It is also different from short-latency somatosensory evoked potentials.

Effective October 1, 2002, CMS initially concluded that there was insufficient scientific or clinical evidence to consider the sNCT test and the device used in performing this test reasonable and necessary within the meaning of section 1862(a)(1)(A) of the law.

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Therefore, sNCT was noncovered.

Effective April 1, 2004, based on a reconsideration of current Medicare policy for sNCT, CMS concludes that *the use of any type of sNCT device (e.g. "current output" type device used to perform current perception threshold (CPT), pain perception threshold (PPT), or pain tolerance threshold (PTT) testing or "voltage input" type device used for voltage-nerve conduction threshold (v-NCT) testing) to diagnose sensory neuropathies or radiculopathies in Medicare beneficiaries is not reasonable and necessary.*

B. Nationally Covered Indications

Not applicable.

C. Nationally Noncovered Indications

All uses of sNCT to diagnose sensory neuropathies or radiculopathies are noncovered.

(This NCD last reviewed *June* 2004.)

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