



Geisinger Health Plan Policies and Procedure Manual

Policy: MP296

Section: Medical Benefit Policy

Subject: Occipital Nerve Block

Applicable Lines of Business

Commercial	X	CHIP	X
Medicare	X	ACA	X
Medicaid	X		

I. Policy: Occipital Nerve Block

II. Purpose/Objective:

To provide a policy of coverage regarding Occipital Nerve Block

III. Responsibility:

- A. Medical Directors
- B. Medical Management

IV. Required Definitions

1. Attachment – a supporting document that is developed and maintained by the policy writer or department requiring/authoring the policy.
2. Exhibit – a supporting document developed and maintained in a department other than the department requiring/authoring the policy.
3. Devised – the date the policy was implemented.
4. Revised – the date of every revision to the policy, including typographical and grammatical changes.
5. Reviewed – the date documenting the annual review if the policy has no revisions necessary.

V. Additional Definitions

Medical Necessity or Medically Necessary means Covered Services rendered by a Health Care Provider that the Plan determines are:

- a. appropriate for the symptoms and diagnosis or treatment of the Member's condition, illness, disease or injury;
- b. provided for the diagnosis, and the direct care and treatment of the Member's condition, illness disease or injury;
- c. in accordance with current standards of good medical treatment practiced by the general medical community.
- d. not primarily for the convenience of the Member, or the Member's Health Care Provider; and
- e. the most appropriate source or level of service that can safely be provided to the Member. When applied to hospitalization, this further means that the Member requires acute care as an inpatient due to the nature of the services rendered or the Member's condition, and the Member cannot receive safe or adequate care as an outpatient.

Medicaid Business Segment

Medically Necessary — A service, item, procedure, or level of care that is necessary for the proper treatment or management of an illness, injury, or disability is one that:

- Will, or is reasonably expected to, prevent the onset of an illness, condition, injury or disability.
- Will, or is reasonably expected to, reduce or ameliorate the physical, mental or developmental effects of an illness, condition, injury or disability.

- Will assist the Member to achieve or maintain maximum functional capacity in performing daily activities, taking into account both the functional capacity of the Member and those functional capacities that are appropriate for Members of the same age

INDICATIONS:

Occipital nerve block may be considered medically necessary when **ALL of the following criteria are met:**

- Diagnosis of occipital neuralgia; **and**
- Documented failure or contraindication to pharmacologic therapy. There must be documentation of the use of at least two (2) classes of medications from the following list of medication classes must be submitted for review: NSAIDs, opiates, non-opioid analgesics, anti-epileptic medications used for treatment of chronic pain, antidepressant medications used for treatment of chronic pain, ASA or ASA derivatives, muscle relaxants, steroids, such as prednisone or Medrol or documented contraindication to each of these drug classes.

LIMITATIONS:

If the medical necessity for occipital nerve block is met, no more than two (2) injections may be performed at a single setting. No more than 3 procedures will be approved in a 12-week period of time per region, with at least 14 days between injections in the initial therapeutic phase. If there is greater than 50% reduction in symptoms or physical and functional improvement for at least 2 months, the provider may request repeat injections performed at intervals of at least 2 months and limited to a maximum total of 4 therapeutic procedures per region per 12 months.

If special circumstances are documented, then repeat injections are limited to a maximum of 6 procedures in 12 months.

For GHP Family, the Benefit Limit Exception (BLE) process will apply to requests for more than six (6) injections per calendar year.

EXCLUSIONS:

Other diagnoses, such as cervicogenic headache, will not be considered medically necessary for this procedure and are **NOT COVERED.**

Medicaid Business Segment:

Any requests for services, that do not meet criteria set in the PARP, may be evaluated on a case by case basis.

CODING ASSOCIATED WITH: Occipital Nerve Block

The following codes are included below for informational purposes and may not be all inclusive. Inclusion of a procedure or device code(s) does not constitute or imply coverage nor does it imply or guarantee provider reimbursement. Coverage is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and any applicable laws regarding coverage of specific services. Please note that per Medicare coverage rules, only specific CPT/HCPCS Codes may be covered for the Medicare Business Segment. Please consult the CMS website at www.cms.gov or the local Medicare Administrative Carrier (MAC) for more information on Medicare coverage and coding requirements

64405- Injection, anesthetic agent, greater occipital nerve.

64640- Destruction by Neurolytic Agent (eg, Chemical, Thermal, Electrical or Radiofrequency) Procedures on the Somatic Nerves

Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) © American Medical Association: Chicago, IL

LINE OF BUSINESS:

Eligibility and contract specific benefits, limitations and/or exclusions will apply. Coverage statements found in the line of business specific benefit document will supersede this policy. For Medicare, applicable LCD's and NCD's will supercede this policy. For PA Medicaid Business segment, this policy applies as written.

REFERENCES:

Vanderhoek MD, Hoang HT, Goff B. Ultrasound-Guided Greater Occipital Nerve Blocks and Pulsed Radiofrequency Ablation for Diagnosis and Treatment of Occipital Neuralgia. Anesth Pain Med. 2013 Sep;3(2):256-259.

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Vanelderen P, Lataster A, Levy R, et al. Occipital neuralgia. *Pain Pract*. 2010 Mar-Apr;10(2):137-44.

Kapural L, Stillman M, Kapural M, et al. Botulinum toxin occipital nerve block for the treatment of severe occipital neuralgia: a case series. *Pain Pract*. 2007 Dec;7(4):337-40.

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Tang Y, Kang J, Zhang Y, et al. Influence of greater occipital nerve block on pain severity in migraine patients: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Am J Emerg Med*. 2017 Nov;35(11):1750-1754.

Cuadrado ML, Aledo-Serrano Á, Navarro P, et al. Short-term effects of greater occipital nerve blocks in chronic migraine: A double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *Cephalalgia*. 2017;37(9):864-872.

Zhang H, Yang X, Lin Y, et al. The efficacy of greater occipital nerve block for the treatment of migraine: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clin Neurol Neurosurg*. 2018; 165:129-133.

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Khansa, Ibrahim M.D.; Janis, Jeffrey E. M.D. Discussion: Greater Occipital Nerve Block for the Treatment of Chronic Migraine Headaches: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*: October 2019; 144(4): 953-955

Fernandes L, Khan N, Dobson J, Randall M, Idrovo L. Multiple Cranial Nerve Blocks as an Alternative Preventative Therapy for Chronic Migraine. *Headache*. 2020;60:981-987.

This policy will be revised as necessary and reviewed no less than annually.

Devised: 1/2015

Revised: 9/15, 7/17(revise drug requirement), 8/18 (Removed Prior Auth), 8/21 (revise frequency limitations)

Reviewed: 11/16; 7/19, 10/20, 10/22, 10/23

Geisinger Health Plan may refer collectively to health care coverage sponsors Geisinger Health Plan, Geisinger Quality Options, Inc., and Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company, unless otherwise noted. Geisinger Health Plan is part of Geisinger, an integrated health care delivery and coverage organization.

Coverage for experimental or investigational treatments, services and procedures is specifically excluded under the member's certificate with Geisinger Health Plan. Unproven services outside of an approved clinical trial are also specifically excluded under the member's certificate with Geisinger Health Plan. This policy does not expand coverage to services or items specifically excluded from coverage in the member's certificate with Geisinger Health Plan. Additional information can be found in MP015 Experimental, Investigational or Unproven Services.

Prior authorization and/or pre-certification requirements for services or items may apply. Pre-certification lists may be found in the member's contract specific benefit document. Prior authorization requirements can be found at <https://www.geisinger.org/health-plan/providers/ghp-clinical-policies>

Please be advised that the use of the logos, service marks or names of Geisinger Health Plan, Geisinger Quality Options, Inc. and Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company on a marketing, press releases or any communication piece regarding the contents of this medical policy is strictly prohibited without the prior written consent of Geisinger Health Plan. Additionally, the above medical policy does not confer any endorsement by Geisinger Health Plan, Geisinger Quality Options, Inc. and Geisinger Indemnity Insurance Company regarding the medical service, medical device or medical lab test described under this medical policy