

# Medical Coverage Policy



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield**  
of Rhode Island

## Anastomosis of Extracranial-Intracranial Arteries

Device/Equipment    Drug    Medical    Surgery    Test    Other

<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>3/16/2010</b>	<b>Policy Last Updated:</b>	<b>3/5/2013</b>
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**Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.**

**Prospective review is not required.**

### Description:

**Intracranial atherosclerotic disease** is the narrowing or obstruction of arteries within the skull that supply the brain. It is caused by atheromatous plaques in the innermost layer of the arterial wall, called the endothelium. Intracranial atherosclerotic disease can lead to transient ischemic attack (TIA), stroke or death, and is usually diagnosed in patients who have presented with a TIA or stroke. Intracranial atherosclerotic disease is usually treated with anticoagulant therapy (i.e., warfarin) or antiplatelet therapy (e.g., aspirin), together with medication to control risk factors for atherosclerosis.

**Extracranial vascular disease** refers to atherosclerosis, which is a hardening and narrowing of the walls of these vessels, due to deposits of fats that form plaques within the arteries. As the plaque deposits gradually enlarge, they interfere with blood flow. Atherosclerosis can affect any large-to-medium-sized artery in the body and cause serious health problems. It is especially dangerous in the extracranial arteries that supply the brain, as decreased blood flow to the brain can result in stroke.

### Medical Criteria:

Anastomosis of the extracranial-intracranial arteries are covered for all conditions other than atherosclerosis. For atherosclerosis, it is not medically necessary as current medical research does not yet support its safety and efficacy.

### Policy:

Prospective medical review is required for BlueCHiP for Medicare and recommended for all other product lines.

Anastomosis is covered for the indications noted above.

### Coverage:

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage, Subscriber Agreement, or Benefit Booklet for applicable services.

### Coding:

The following code requires preauthorization:  
**61711**

**Also known as:**

Not applicable

**Related topics:**

Not applicable

**Published:**

Provider Update, May 2013  
Provider Update, May 2012  
Provider Update, April 2011  
Provider Update, May 2010  
Provider Update, June 2008

**References:**

Ehtisham A, Chimowitz M. Intracranial larger artery atherosclerosis. Referenced from UptoDate on 2/2/10: <http://www.uptodate.com/home/store.do>.

The EC/IC Bypass Study Group. Failure of extracranial-intracranial arterial bypass to reduce the risk of ischemic stroke. Results of an international randomized trial. *New England Journal of Medicine*;1985 Nov 7;313(19):1191-2000.

**History:**

3/5/13 Annual review  
2/21/12 Annual review; additional information added to description, clarification of medical criteria added  
2/15/11 Annual review  
3/16/10 New policy approved

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