

# Medical Coverage Policy



## Vagal Nerve Stimulation

Device/Equipment  Drug  Medical  Surgery  Test  Other

|                 |           |                      |           |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Effective Date: | 10/1/2005 | Policy Last Updated: | 10/4/2011 |
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**Prospective review is recommended/required. Please check the member agreement for preauthorization guidelines.**

**Prospective review is not required.**

### Description:

Vagal nerve stimulation (VNS) therapy uses a device implanted under the skin in the left chest area. This device sends mild, intermittent electrical impulses through a lead to the left vagus nerve, which then sends signals to the brain. The device is programmed individually by the neurologist for each patient, and the patient has the ability to either initiate or abort stimulation with the use of a hand held magnet. The patient may also increase the electrical impulses if he or she feels a seizure is forthcoming.

VNS therapy has been investigated as an alternative treatment in individuals with medically refractory partial onset seizures who:

- have failed pharmacologic management, and
- have failed or are not suitable candidates for surgical management.

There is demonstration of efficacy in a select subset of patients with epilepsy.

The use of VNS therapy as a treatment for depression has been studied. At this time there is insufficient medical literature to support the efficacy of this treatment for depression.

### Medical Criteria:

None

### Policy:

VNS is **medically necessary** as an adjunctive therapy in reducing the frequency of seizures in adults and adolescents over the age of twelve who have partial onset seizures that are refractory to antiepileptic medications.

Vagal nerve stimulation treatment for all other conditions, including treatment for depression, is **not medically necessary**.

**Preauthorization is not required or recommended.**

**Coverage:**

Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate member certificate/subscriber agreement/Rite Care contract for applicable diagnostic imaging, lab, and machine tests or surgery coverage/benefits.

**Coding:**

**61885, 61886, 61888, 64553, 64573, 64568, 64569, 64570, 95974, 95975**

**L8680** Implantable neurostimulator electrode, each

**L8681** Patient programmer (external) for use with implantable programmable neurostimulator pulse generator

**L8682** Implantable neurostimulator radiofrequency receiver

**L8683** Radiofrequency transmitter (external) for use with implantable neurostimulator radiofrequency receiver

**L8685** Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, single array, rechargeable, includes extension

**L8686** Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, single array, non-rechargeable, includes extension

**L8687** Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, dual array, rechargeable, includes extension

**L8688** Implantable neurostimulator pulse generator, dual array, non-rechargeable, includes extension

**L8689** External recharging system for battery (internal) for use with implantable neurostimulator

**Also Known As:**

NCP

NeuroCybernetic prosthesis

Vagal nerve stimulation

Vagal nerve stimulation for epilepsy, NeuroCybernetic prosthesis

**Related Topics:**

Not applicable

**Published:**

Policy Update, Nov 2002

Policy Update, Sep 2005

Policy Update, Aug 2006

Policy Update, Oct 2007

Provider Update, Oct 2008  
Provider Update, Sep 2009  
Provider Update, Jan 2011  
Provider Update, Dec 2011

## **References:**

2005 TEC Assessment; Tab 8.

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## **Vagal nerve stimulation for epilepsy:**

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Murphy JV, Torkelson R, Dowler I, Simon S, Hudson S. *Vagal Nerve Stimulation in Refractory Epilepsy The First 100 Patients Receiving Vagal Nerve Stimulation at a Pediatric Epilepsy Center*. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine; 2003;157:560-564.

## **Vagal nerve stimulation for depression:**

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Decision memo for vagus nerve stimulation for of resistant depression (TRD) (CAG-00313R). Baltimore, MD: CMS; May 4, 2007. Available at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecisionmemo.asp?id=195>. Accessed June 17, 2008.

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Shuchman M. *Vagus nerve stimulation for treatment-resistant depression: a randomized, controlled acute phase trial*. *Biol Psychiatry*;2005;58:347-354.

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