Subject: Foot Orthotics and Diabetic Shoes*

Effective Date: October 1, 1999

Department(s): Utilization Management

Policy: Therapeutic shoes (for individuals with diabetes) and foot (in-shoe) orthotics are reimbursable under Plans administered by QualCare, Inc.

Objective: To ensure proper and consistent reimbursement and to delineate medically necessary indications for foot orthotics and for therapeutic shoes for individuals with diabetes.

Procedure:

1. Reimbursable indications for in-shoe orthotics include, but are not limited to:

   - Congenital flexible pes planus, either idiopathic or neurologic
   - Tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction or rupture, documented by clinical indicators to include:
     - “Too many toes” sign
     - Lack of heel inversion on heel raise
     - Progressive pes planus and/or positive MRI
   - Plantar fasciitis with or without calcaneal spur
   - Acquired or post-traumatic hypermobility of forefoot or hind foot as documented by biomechanical exam and/or radiographic findings
   - Insensate foot or peripheral vascular disease meeting criteria for Medicare reimbursement

2. For the following conditions in-shoe orthotics are NOT reimbursable:

   - Congenital hallux valgus
   - Congenital metatarsus adductus
• Cavus foot with associated hammertoe deformity
• Chronic hyperkeratotic lesions

3. All claims for in-shoe orthotics must be accompanied by a letter of medical necessity that must include the following:

• Duration of symptoms exceeding two months
• For plantar fasciitis/heel pain syndrome, duration of medical treatment must exceed six weeks
• Trial period of strapping and/or OTC arch supports exceeding 6 weeks
• Description of previous care, which may include but is not limited to: oral anti-inflammatories, local injections, and physical therapy

4. In-shoe orthotics will be replaced only if the medical indication for their fabrication has changed or a minimum of three years has elapsed since they were dispensed.

5. For the following diagnoses for which foot orthotics are prescribed, medical review is not necessary for pre-certification:

   - Tendonitis: 726.90, 726.71, 726.72
   - Posterior tibial tendon dysfunction: 726.72
   - Limb length discrepancy: 736.81
   - Patello-femoral Syndrome: 717.7
   - Iliotibial Band Syndrome: 728.89
   - Functional Hallux Limitus/Rigidus: 735.2
   - Hallux Abductovalgus: 735.0
   - Plantar Fasciitis: 726.73, 728.71
   - Pes Planus: 734, 754.61, 754.69
   - Calcaneal Apophysitis: 732.5
   - Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy: 250.6, 250.8
   - Charcot Neuropathy: 094.0

6. For individuals with foot disease related to diabetes, including but not limited to skin trophic changes (701.8, 701.9) or breakdown (707.1), current or previous ulcers (707.9), peripheral neuropathy (250.6, 250.8), previous amputation of the foot or part of the foot, peripheral vascular disease (443.8, 443.9), Charcot arthropathy of foot or ankle (713.5), therapeutic shoes are reimbursable (not as durable medical equipment) as follows:
a. Custom-Molded Shoes  
   i. Constructed over a positive model of the patient’s foot  
   ii. Made from leather or other suitable material of equal quality  
   iii. Have removable inserts that can be altered or replaced as the condition warrants  
        AND  
   iv. Have some form of shoe closure  

b. Depth Shoes  
   i. With full-length, heel-to-toe filler that, when removed, provides a minimum of 3/16 inch of additional depth used to accommodate custom-molded or customized inserts  
   ii. Made from leather or other suitable material of equal quality  
   iii. Have some form of shoe closure  
        AND  
   iv. Are available in sizes and widths allowing the sole to be graded to the size and width of the upper portions of the shoes according to the American standard last sizing schedule or its equivalent.  

c. Within a given 12-month interval, therapeutic shoes for individuals with diabetic foot disease are reimbursable with the following limitations  
   i. One pair of custom-molded shoes (including inserts provided with such shoes) and two additional pairs of inserts  
      OR  
   ii. One pair of depth shoes and three pairs of inserts (not including the non-customized removable inserts provided with such shoes)  

d. For individuals who medically qualify for both diabetic therapeutic shoes and a leg brace that is an integral part of the shoe, these items (shoe and brace) are both reimbursable.  

e. Modifications may be substituted for inserts, including but not limited to the following:  
   i. Rigid Rocker Bottoms  
   ii. Roller Bottoms  
   iii. Metatarsal Bars  
   iv. Wedges  
   v. Offset Heels  

f. Other reimbursable modifications to diabetic shoes include but are not limited to the following:
i. Flared Heels  
ii. Velcro Closures  
iii. Inserts for Missing Toes

7. When diabetic foot conditions are documented by the physician managing the individual’s diabetes, therapeutic shoes must be prescribed by a podiatrist or other qualified physician.

8. Diabetic therapeutic shoes are only reimbursable if dispensed by a Medicare-certified provider of these shoes.

References


The American College of Foot & Ankle Orthopedics & Medicine Prescription Custom Foot Orthoses Practice Guidelines 12/2004 Addendum with Individual References


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*Consistent with Summary Plan Description (SPD). When there is discordance between this policy and the SPD, the provisions of the SPD prevail.