Whole Body Computed Tomography (CT) Screening

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DESCRIPTION

Whole body computed tomography scans (CT scans), encompassing the body from the neck to the pelvis, have been proposed as a general screening test for diseases of the thyroid (i.e., thyroid cancer), lungs (i.e. lung cancer), heart (i.e., cardiovascular disease), and abdominal and pelvic organs (cancer). Often the test is marketed directly to the patient and is offered through mobile CT scanners that travel from community to community.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE POLICY CRITERIA

CMS Coverage Manuals*

Medicare Benefit Policy Manual
Chapter 16 - General Exclusions From Coverage

See Section 20 in the following link:
§20 - Services Not Reasonable and Necessary
Medicare excludes expenses incurred for “Items and services which are not reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member.”[1] A whole body CT scan as a screening tool for an asymptomatic individual is not considered “reasonable and necessary” by Medicare guidelines as it is not used to diagnose or treat an illness or injury. In addition, Medicare covers only specified services under the Medicare Preventive Services benefit, and a full body CT screening is not part of this limited preventive benefit. (See the Medicare Preventive Services Chart and Chapter 18 of the Medicare Claims Processing Manual.)

### National Coverage Determinations (NCDs)*

See References[3]

### POLICY GUIDELINES

#### REGULATORY STATUS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published the following information on whole body CT scanning:[4]

“At this time the FDA knows of no scientific evidence demonstrating that whole-body scanning of individuals without symptoms provides more benefit than harm to people being screened.”

- “Whole-body CT screening has not been demonstrated to meet generally accepted criteria for an effective screening procedure.
- Medical professional societies have not endorsed whole-body CT scanning for individuals without symptoms.
- CT screening of high-risk individuals for specific diseases such as lung cancer or colon cancer is currently being studied.
- The radiation from a CT scan may be associated with a very small increase in the possibility of developing cancer later in a person's life.”

Information from the FDA indicates that recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American Medical Association, which have been added to those of the American College of Radiology, the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, and the Health Physics Society, all of which do not recommend CT screening.

### CROSS REFERENCES
Whole Body Dual X-Ray Absorptiometry (DEXA or DXA) to Determine Body Composition, Radiology, Policy No. M-41

REFERENCES
1. Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (SSA) §1862 (a)(1)(A)
2. Decision Memo CAG-00396N for Screening Computed Tomography Colonography (CTC) for Colorectal Cancer
3. NCD for Computed Tomography (220.1)

CODING

NOTE: There are no CPT or HCPCS codes specific to whole body CT scanning.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>76497</td>
<td>Unlisted computed tomography procedure (eg diagnostic, interventional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCPCS</td>
<td>None</td>
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*IMPORTANT NOTE: Medicare Advantage medical policies use the most current Medicare references available at the time the policy was developed. Links to Medicare references will take viewers to external websites outside of the health plan’s web control as these sites are not maintained by the health plan.