



**Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon · Regence BlueShield
Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah · Regence BlueShield of Idaho
Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association**

Note: Although the services described in this position statement are not subject to routine medical necessity review, utilization is subject to audit.

Clinical Position Statement: Durable Medical Equipment Upgrades, Replacements and Duplicates

Replacement of all or part of a durable medical equipment (DME) item occurs when the current item no longer functions properly and another equivalent item is required to replace it.

A DME upgrade is the substitution or addition of part or all of a properly functioning DME item with a newer, enhanced version of the existing device.

A DME item is considered a duplicate or back-up if it meets the same medical and functional needs already met by DME that the patient currently owns or rents.

Replacement or Upgrade

- All or part of a durable medical equipment (DME) item may warrant replacement or upgrade when all of the following conditions are present:
 - The current DME item is no longer able to perform its basic function due to one of the following:
 - Damage or wear, or
 - A significant change in the patient's medical condition such that the item can no longer meet the patient's medical needs
 - The current DME item cannot be repaired or adapted adequately to meet the patient's medical needs unless the cost of repair, net of available warranty coverage, exceeds the cost of replacement.

Duplicates

- A duplicate or back-up DME item may be reasonable only if it is needed to sustain life in the event the primary item fails, e.g., ventilator
- Duplicate or back-up DME items used for convenience, leisure or recreational activities are not required to sustain life.