TOTAL BODY AND REGIONAL HYPOTHERMIA
RRU1200.009
BlueReview POSTED DATE: 3/23/2004
EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/23/2004

COVERAGE:

Total Body Hypothermia during surgery is allowed as a special anesthesia service, when billed separately by the anesthesiologist. Total body hypothermia is typically billed by the anesthesiologist, while regional hypothermia is billed by the surgeon. No additional benefits are available for regional hypothermia as it is considered an integral part of the surgical procedure.

DESCRIPTION:

Total body hypothermia reduces the oxygen requirement in tissues and organs. It is induced to provide a margin of safety during ischemic insult associated with some complex surgical procedures.

Hypothermia is classified by the following categories of endothermic core (EC) temperature:

- Mild (37-30EC)
- Moderate (30-25EC)
- Deep (25-20EC)
- Profound (20-10EC)
- Severe (below 10EC)

Regional body hypothermia (catheter infusion of iced saline solution), is a technique for lowering the body temperature in isolated regions of the body.

RATIONALE:

Total Body Hypothermia is used to permit total circulatory arrest for complicated procedures in the brain, great vessels, spinal cord and heart. At 20EC, 20 minutes of total circulatory arrest are well tolerated.

Regional body hypothermia is used to reduce metabolic rates, oxygen demand, and organ damage in a body part during a surgical procedure, therefore limiting ischemic damage. The procedure (99185) is an intragal part of the surgery, managed by the surgical team in preparation for the procedure and does not warrant separate reimbursement to the surgeon or anesthesiologist.

PRICING:

None

REFERENCES:
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DISCLAIMER:

State and federal law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific inclusions/exclusions, takes precedence over Medical Policy and must be considered first in determining coverage. The member’s contract benefits in effect on the date that services are rendered must be used. Any benefits are subject to the payment of premiums for the date on which services are rendered. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically. HMO Blue Texas physicians who are contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/medical group must contact the IPA/medical group for information regarding HMO claims/reimbursement information and other general polices and procedures.