

Clinical Policy: Eye Examination under General Anesthesia

Reference Number: CP.VP.81

Last Review Date: 08/2025

[Coding Implications](#)[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Description

This policy describes the medical necessity requirements for ocular examination under general anesthesia.

Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] (Centene) and Envolve Vision, Inc.[®] (Envolve) that eye examination under general anesthesia is **medically necessary** for the following indications:
 - A. Patients who cannot tolerate an examination while conscious due to excessive fear, developmental disabilities or behavioral conditions
- II. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene and Envolve that eye examination under general anesthesia is **not medically necessary** when the potential risks associated with general anesthesia outweigh the clinical need for ophthalmological evaluation.

Background

An eye exam and evaluation performed under anesthesia may be conducted when a patient has a significant injury or cannot otherwise tolerate the examination while conscious. Exams under anesthesia (EUA) typically involve corneal measurements, cycloplegic refractions, and dilated retinal exams. Risks of anesthesia should be compared to the need for ophthalmological examination, as general anesthesia has potential complications that may contribute to morbidity. Thorough assessment prior to administration of general anesthesia is critical to avoid patients at risk of complications.

Coding Implications

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT[®]). CPT[®] is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2025, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

CPT [®] Codes	Description
92018	Ophthalmological examination and evaluation, under general anesthesia, with or without manipulation of globe for passive range of motion or other manipulation to facilitate diagnostic examination; complete
92019	Ophthalmological examination and evaluation, under general anesthesia, with or without manipulation of globe for passive range of motion or other manipulation to facilitate diagnostic examination; limited

Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals	Date	Approval Date
Annual review	12/2019	12/2019
Converted to new template	09/2020	10/2020
Annual Review	12/2020	12/2020
Annual Review	12/2021	12/2021
Annual Review	11/2022	11/2022
Annual Review	11/2023	12/2023
Annual Review	11/2024	12/2024
Annual Review	08/2025	10/2025

References

1. Vigoda, M, et al., Can children undergoing ophthalmologic examinations under anesthesia be safely anesthetized without using an IV line?, Clin Ophthalmol. 2011; 5: 503–508.
2. Mei C, Kosichenko J, Shulman J. Avoiding Exam Under Anesthesia: Feasibility of In-Office Multimodal Imaging on an Infant, Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science July 2020, Vol.61, PB00121.
3. Borland, L.M., Colligan, J. and Brandom, B.W. (2004), Frequency of anesthesia-related complications in children with Down syndrome under general anesthesia for noncardiac procedures. Pediatric Anesthesia, 14: 733-738.
4. Harris M, Chung F. Complications of General Anesthesia. Clin Plastic Surg 40 (2013) 503-513.

Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. “Health Plan” means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan’s affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or

regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

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Note: For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

Note: For Medicare members, to ensure consistency with the Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), all applicable NCDs, LCDs, and Medicare Coverage Articles should be reviewed prior to applying the criteria set forth in this clinical policy. Refer to the CMS website at <https://www.cms.gov> for additional information.

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