

CHAPTER 1
SECTION 24.3

PHOTOTHERAPY AND PHOTOCHEMOTHERAPY (PUVA)

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I. PROCEDURE CODE RANGE

96900 - 96913

II. DESCRIPTION

A. Phototherapy is the use of ultraviolet light alone for the treatment of dermatological disorders.

B. Photochemotherapy is the use of ultraviolet light together with a drug (either systemic or topical) for the treatment of dermatological disorders. This treatment may also be called PUVA therapy or Goeckerman treatment.

III. POLICY

Phototherapy and photochemotherapy are considered eligible for coverage when used to treat severe disabling dermatological conditions which are resistant to, or not adequately responsive to other forms of conservative therapy (e.g., topical corticosteroids, coal/tar preparations) subject to the provisions outlined below under "Policy Considerations". One office visit per month billed in conjunction with PUVA treatment may be allowed. More frequent office visits billed in conjunction with PUVA treatment should be denied unless supporting medical documentation justifies medical necessity.

A. Effective December 29, 1982 - Goeckerman treatment for Psoriasis.

B. Photochemotherapy is covered in the treatment of the following dermatological skin diseases:

1. Effective May 7, 1982 - Psoriasis
2. Effective May 7, 1982 - Vitiligo
3. Effective March 1, 1985 - Mycosis fungoides (cutaneous T cell lymphoma)
4. Effective April 12, 1991, for:

- a. Alopecia areata
- b. Atopic eczema
- c. Photosensitive dermatoses
 - (1) Solar urticaria
 - (2) Polymorphic light eruption
 - (3) Actinic reticuloid
 - (4) Persistent light reactor
 - (5) Photosensitive eczema
- d. Pruritic eruptions of HIV infection
- e. Pruritus, other causes
- f. Parapsoriasis
- g. Acuta and chronica pityriasis lichenoides et varioliformis (Mucha-Habermann)
- h. Lichen planus

C. Effective April 12, 1991, phototherapy is covered in the treatment of the following dermatological skin diseases:

- 1. Psoriasis
- 2. Eczema
- 3. Photodermatoses
- 4. Pruritus
- 5. Pityriasis rosea
- 6. Lichen planus
- 7. Pityriasis lichenoides
- 8. Acne
- 9. Parapsoriasis
- 10. Pruritic eruptions of HIV infection

D. The above list is not all inclusive. Other conditions not appearing on the above list may be considered for cost-sharing following medical review to determine medical necessity and appropriateness of treatment, given the potential long-term risks, such as skin cancer and PUVA-induced tumors.

E. Home Therapy

1. Effective November 1, 1986, home phototherapy for neonatal jaundice is covered for a term infant whose elevated bilirubin is not due to any pathologic hepatic or RH incompatibility disorder. Initiation of home phototherapy is limited to infants with the following characteristics:

- a. Term infant (36 weeks and beyond), older than 24 hours, otherwise healthy.
- b. Pathologic hyperbilirubinemia.
- c. Total and direct-reacting bilirubin concentration without an elevation in direct reacting bilirubin.
- d. Maternal and infant blood typing.

NOTE: Home therapy is covered for the Biliblanket phototherapy device effective June 9, 1989, and for the Wallaby Blanket effective September 2, 1989.

2. Effective April 1, 1993, home therapy is covered in the treatment of the following dermatological skin diseases:

- a. Phototherapy using devices emitting predominantly UVB radiation for the treatment of psoriasis, and phototherapy with UV or visible radiation for the treatment of solar urticaria.
- b. Photochemotherapy with trioxsalen and sunlight in the treatment of vitiligo and photodermatoses.

3. Home UVB therapy is appropriate when prescribed by a physician who will regularly supervise and monitor the patient's progress with the therapy. A patient selected for home therapy will be, in the judgment of the physician, motivated, reliable, able to understand the use and risks of the therapy and will agree to return at intervals for re-evaluation by the physician. Home therapy is usually prescribed for a patient who has difficulty attending on-site therapy because of distance or physical limitations and/or can understand the use and risks of home therapy.

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