FACET JOINT FUSION, MINIMALLY INVASIVE

Coverage for services, procedures, medical devices and drugs are dependent upon benefit eligibility as outlined in the member's specific benefit plan. This Medical Coverage Guideline must be read in its entirety to determine coverage eligibility, if any.

This Medical Coverage Guideline provides information related to coverage determinations only and does not imply that a service or treatment is clinically appropriate or inappropriate. The provider and the member are responsible for all decisions regarding the appropriateness of care. Providers should provide BCBSAZ complete medical rationale when requesting any exceptions to these guidelines.

The section identified as “Description” defines or describes a service, procedure, medical device or drug and is in no way intended as a statement of medical necessity and/or coverage.

The section identified as “Criteria” defines criteria to determine whether a service, procedure, medical device or drug is considered medically necessary or experimental or investigational.

State or federal mandates, e.g., FEP program, may dictate that any drug, device or biological product approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may not be considered experimental or investigational and thus the drug, device or biological product may be assessed only on the basis of medical necessity.

Medical Coverage Guidelines are subject to change as new information becomes available.

For purposes of this Medical Coverage Guideline, the terms "experimental" and "investigational" are considered to be interchangeable.

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Description:

Minimally invasive facet joint fusion has been investigated as a treatment for facet joint degeneration and pain. Allograft dowels are placed in the facet joints to promote spinal stability and pain reduction. The procedure can be done with a minimal incision and instrumentation designed to protect surrounding tissue. Allograft dowel products include TruFUSE® NuFix® and FIT™ Facet Fusion Implant.
FACET JOINT FUSION, MINIMALLY INVASIVE (cont.)

Criteria:

- Minimally invasive facet joint fusion is considered experimental or investigational based upon:
  1. Insufficient scientific evidence to permit conclusions concerning the effect on health outcomes, and
  2. Insufficient evidence to support improvement of the net health outcome, and
  3. Insufficient evidence to support improvement of the net health outcome as much as, or more than, established alternatives.

Resources:

Literature reviewed 10/11/16. We do not include marketing materials, poster boards and non-published literature in our review.


