Sacral Nerve Stimulation for Urinary Problems

Description:

Sacral nerve stimulation (SNS) is indicated for the treatment of urinary retention and the symptoms of overactive bladder, including urge incontinence and significant symptoms of urgency-frequency, alone or in combination, in patients who have failed or could not tolerate more conservative treatments.

The SNS helps control urinary problems through an implanted device that sends mild electrical impulses via a lead wire to the sacral nerves that control the bladder, sphincter and pelvic floor muscles. The system consists of a neurostimulator, an extension, a lead, accessories and a patient programmer.

Policy/Criteria:

Total Health Care considers implantation of the InterStim® (Medtronic Inc., Minneapolis, MN), a device for stimulation of the sacral nerve, medically necessary for the treatment of urge UI or symptoms of urge-frequency when all of the following criteria are met:¹

1. The member has experienced urge UI or symptoms of urge-frequency for at least 12 months and the condition has resulted in significant disability (the frequency and/or severity of symptoms are limiting the member's ability to participate in daily activities); and
2. Pharmacotherapies (i.e., at least 2 different anti-cholinergic drugs or a combination of an anti-cholinergic and a tricyclic anti-depressant) as well as behavioral treatments (e.g., pelvic floor exercise, biofeedback, timed voids, and fluid management) have failed; and
3. Test stimulation provides at least 50 % decrease in symptoms.

A test stimulation of the device is considered medically necessary for members who meet selection criteria 1 and 2 above.

¹ Aetna Clinical Policy Bulletin 2/21/12
Total Health Care also considers implantation of the InterStim® medically necessary for the treatment of non-obstructive urinary retention when all of the following criteria are met:

4. The member has experienced urinary retention for at least 12 months and the condition has resulted in significant disability (the frequency and/or severity of symptoms are limiting the member’s ability to participate in daily activities); and
5. Pharmacotherapies (e.g., alpha blockers and cholinergics, and antibiotics for urinary tract infections) as well as intermittent catheterization have failed or are not well-tolerated; and
6. A test stimulation of the device has provided at least 50% decrease in residual urine volume.

*A test stimulation of the device is considered medically necessary for members who meet selection criteria 1 and 2 above.

Total Health Care considers the InterStim Continence Control System® experimental and investigational for all other indications.

According to the product labeling, InterStim® therapy is contraindicated and has no proven value for individuals who have not demonstrated an appropriate response to test stimulation or are unable to operate the neurostimulator.

Exclusions: According to the manufacturer, Medtronic, Inc. InterStim therapy has no proven value for individuals with mechanical obstruction such as benign prostatic hypertrophy, cancer, or urethral stricture; persons with stress incontinence; and patients with neurologic disease origins, such as multiple sclerosis or diabetes with peripheral nerve involvement. InterStim has not been shown to be effective for urinary retention due to these causes.

*Prior to the implantation of a permanent SNS system, patients are screened for potential therapeutic benefit by undergoing a trial in which a temporary electrode is percutaneously introduced into the left or right sacral nerve foramen and an external device provides continuous stimulation. Length of the trial varies and patient must demonstrate a positive therapeutic response to qualify as a candidate for permanent implantation.

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1 Aetna Clinical Policy Bulletin 2/21/12