



Medica Central Coverage Policy

Policy Name: Trigger Point Dry Needling MP9672

Effective Date: 09/01/2025

Important Information – Please Read Before Using This Policy

These services may or may not be covered by all Medica Central plans. Coverage is subject to requirements in applicable federal or state laws. Please refer to the member's plan document for other specific coverage information. If there is a difference between this general information and the member's plan document, the member's plan document will be used to determine coverage. With respect to Medicare, Medicaid, and other government programs, this policy will apply unless these programs require different coverage.

Members may contact Medica Customer Service at the phone number listed on their member identification card to discuss their benefits more specifically. Providers with questions may call the Provider Service Center. Please use the Quick Reference Guide on the Provider Communications page for the appropriate phone number. <https://mo-central.medica.com/Providers/SSM-employee-health-plan-for-IL-MO-OK-providers>

Medica Central coverage policies are not medical advice. Members should consult with appropriate health care providers to obtain needed medical advice, care, and treatment.

Coverage Policy

Trigger point dry needling is investigative unproven and therefore **NOT COVERED**. There is insufficient reliable evidence in the form of high quality peer-reviewed medical literature to establish the efficacy or effects on health care outcomes.

Description

Pressure on hyper-sensitive points in muscle fascia, referred to as trigger points, may result in muscle pain and sometimes may cause referred pain in unrelated parts of the body. Trigger point dry needling (also referred to as intramuscular stimulation or IMS) utilizes thin, solid filament needles that are inserted directly into myofascial trigger points (MTPs). The word "dry" indicates that nothing is injected through the needles. Electro-dry needling (i.e., electro-needling) is a variation of dry needling, with the addition of an electrical stimulus delivered through cables attached to the needles. A pulse of electricity is sent through the needles and into the tissue.

The intent of therapy is to cause a local twitch response in the muscle at the site of needle insertion. This response is purported to relax the overactive muscles, reduce tension and pain, and restore normal length and function to the targeted muscle. Dry needling is being studied to treat a variety of indications including, but not limited to, myofascial pain, headache or migraine, back pain and painful shoulder conditions.

FDA Approval

Dry needling is a procedure and therefore not regulated by the FDA. Dry needling is performed using acupuncture needles. Many needles have been cleared through the Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) 510 (k) Premarket Notification process.

Prior Authorization

Prior authorization is not applicable. Claims for this service are subject to retrospective review and denial of coverage, as investigative services are not eligible for reimbursement.



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Coding Considerations

Use the current applicable CPT/HCPCS code(s). The following codes are included below for informational purposes only, and are subject to change without notice. Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement.

CPT Codes:

- **20560** – Needle insertion(s) without injection(s); 1 or 2 muscles
- **20561** – Needle insertion(s) without injection(s); 3 or more muscles
- **20999** - Unlisted procedure, musculoskeletal system

	Committee/Source	Date(s)
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Administrative
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