

Acupuncture

EmblemHealth Medicare HMO Plans with Acupuncture Benefit

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Medical Guideline Disclaimer

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Definition

Acupuncture is the practice of piercing the skin with needles at specific body sites to induce anesthesia, to relieve pain to alleviate withdrawal symptoms of substance abusers, or to treat various non-painful disorders. The placement of needles into the skin is dictated by the location of meridians. These meridians are thought to mark patterns of energy flow throughout the human body. Acupuncture has 4 components—the acupuncture needle(s), the target location defined by traditional Chinese medicine, the depth of insertion, and the stimulation of the inserted needle. Acupuncture may be performed with or without electrical stimulation

Guideline

Members of certain Medicare HMO plans are eligible for acupuncture when performed by an individual licensed by New York State to perform acupuncture and when performed for the following diagnoses:

1. Adult postoperative nausea and vomiting
2. Chemotherapy related nausea and vomiting
3. Pregnancy related nausea and vomiting
4. Carpal tunnel syndrome
5. Epicondylitis (tennis elbow)
6. Headache
7. ~~Low back pain~~ (not covered as of Jan. 21, 2020. See [CMS National Coverage Determination Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain \(cLBP\)](#))
8. Menstrual pain
9. Myofascial pain
10. Osteoarthritis

Limitations/Exclusions

1. Acupuncture point injections (aka acupoint injection therapy or biopuncture) — a procedure by which pharmaceuticals and natural biologic products (i.e., vitamins, herbal extracts and other homeopathics) are injected into the body at acupuncture points for disease treatment/prevention — are considered investigational. Conditions regarded as investigational include the following (list not all-inclusive):
 - a. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.
 - b. Cancer-related pain
 - c. Cervical spondylosis
 - d. Chronic daily headache
 - e. Dysmenorrhea (menstrual pain)
 - f. Epicondylitis

2. Acupuncture is considered investigational for all indications other than those listed above; including the following (list not all-inclusive)

Acne	Intra-cerebral hemorrhage
Addiction/substance abuse	Irritable bowel syndrome
AIDS	Menopause-associated vasomotor symptoms
Allergies	Menopausal hot flashes
Amblyopia	Menstrual cramps/dysmenorrhea
Asthma	Multiple sclerosis
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Mumps
Autism spectrum disorders	Myopia
Bell's palsy	Neck pain/cervical spondylosis
Breast cancer-related hot flashes	Nocturnal enuresis
Burning mouth syndrome	Obesity/ weight reduction
Cancer-induced bone pain	Painful neuropathies
Cancer-related dyspnea	Parkinson's disease
Cancer-related fatigue	Parkinson's disease-related fatigue
Carpal tunnel syndrome	Peripheral arterial disease (e.g., intermittent claudication)
Cerebral palsy	Phantom leg pain
Chemotherapy-induced leukopenia	Plantar fasciitis
Chemotherapy-induced neuropathic pain	Polycystic ovary syndrome
Chronic pain syndrome (e.g., RSD, facial pain)	Post-herpetic neuralgia
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Post-operative ileus
Chronic constipation	Post-traumatic stress disorder
Chronic fatigue syndrome	Pruritus
Cognitive impairment	Psoriasis
Diabetic gastroparesis	Psychiatric disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia)
Diabetic peripheral neuropathy	Raynaud's disease pain
Dry eyes	Recurrent pregnancy loss
Endometriosis pain	Respiratory disorders
Epilepsy	Rheumatoid arthritis
Erectile dysfunction	Rhinitis
Facial spasm	Sensorineural deafness
Fetal breech presentation	Smoking cessation
Fibromyalgia	Spasticity after stroke
Fibrotic contractures	Stroke rehabilitation (e.g., dysphagia)
Glaucoma	Tension headache
Heart failure	Tic disorders (e.g., Tourette syndrome)
Hypertension	Tinnitus
Hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy	Urinary incontinence
Induction of labor	Uterine fibroids
Infantile colic	
Infantile diarrhea	

Infertility (e.g., to assist oocyte retrieval and embryo transfer during IVF treatment cycle)
 Inflammatory bowel diseases (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis)
 Insomnia (including cancer-related insomnia)

Xerostomia
 Whiplash

Reimbursement

EmblemHealth **will** reimburse acupuncture services as follows **eff. 11/9/2019**:

- Credentialed participating licensed acupuncturists or physicians (MD or DO) only
- Acupuncture service CPT codes 97810–97814
- Acupuncture reimbursement is limited to a maximum of four total service units in any combination, per date of service, subject to correct coding
- Either acupuncture or evaluation and management (E/M) on the same day, but not both:
 - For acupuncture with a new patient E/M (including separately identifiable service-modifier 25), EmblemHealth will reimburse only the E/M service
 - For acupuncture with established patient E/M (including separately identifiable service-modifier 25), EmblemHealth will reimburse only the acupuncture service

EmblemHealth **will not** reimburse acupuncture services as follows **eff. 11/9/2019**:

- Codes other than those listed in the coding grid below.
- Acupuncture students, interns, or fellows directly or under EmblemHealth

Revision History

Jun. 16, 2023	Substituted the link to EmblemHealth’s Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain policy with a direct link to corresponding CMS National Coverage Determination
Mar. 13, 2020	Removed low back pain eff. 1/21/2020 (re-direct link provided to new policy specific to chronic low back pain)
Aug. 9, 2019	Title change to “EmblemHealth Medicare HMO Plans with Acupuncture Benefit Added Reimbursement specifications eff. 11/9/2019 No clinical coverage revision
Mar. 8, 2019	Added coverage for VIP Premier for City of New York and VIP Rx Carve out City of New York plans (retroactive to Jan. 1, 2019) Removed shoulder pain from Limitations/Exclusions
Jan. 1, 2019	Added coverage for Medicare VIP Essential members

Applicable Procedure Codes

97810	Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient
97811	Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; without electrical stimulation, each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with re-insertion of needle(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
97813	Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, initial 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient
97814	Acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with re-insertion of needle(s) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

Applicable Diagnosis Codes

G43.001	Migraine without aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.009	Migraine without aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.011	Migraine without aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.019	Migraine without aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.101	Migraine with aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.109	Migraine with aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.111	Migraine with aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.119	Migraine with aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.401	Hemiplegic migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.409	Hemiplegic migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.411	Hemiplegic migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.419	Hemiplegic migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.501	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.509	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.511	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.519	Persistent migraine aura without cerebral infarction, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.601	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.609	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.611	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.619	Persistent migraine aura with cerebral infarction, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.701	Chronic migraine without aura, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.709	Chronic migraine without aura, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.711	Chronic migraine without aura, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.719	Chronic migraine without aura, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.801	Other migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.809	Other migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.811	Other migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.819	Other migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.821	Menstrual migraine, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.829	Menstrual migraine, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.831	Menstrual migraine, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.839	Menstrual migraine, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.901	Migraine, unspecified, not intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.909	Migraine, unspecified, not intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.911	Migraine, unspecified, intractable, with status migrainosus
G43.919	Migraine, unspecified, intractable, without status migrainosus
G43.B0	Ophthalmoplegic migraine, not intractable
G43.C0	Periodic headache syndromes in child or adult, not intractable
G43.D0	Abdominal migraine, not intractable

G44.009	Cluster headache syndrome, unspecified, not intractable
G44.019	Episodic cluster headache, not intractable
G44.1	Vascular headache, not elsewhere classified
G44.209	Tension-type headache, unspecified, not intractable
G44.219	Episodic tension-type headache, not intractable
G44.229	Chronic tension-type headache, not intractable
G44.309	Post-traumatic headache, unspecified, not intractable
G44.319	Acute post-traumatic headache, not intractable
G44.329	Chronic post-traumatic headache, not intractable
G44.52	New daily persistent headache (NDPH)
G44.53	Primary thunderclap headache
G44.59	Other complicated headache syndrome
G44.81	Hypnic headache
G44.83	Primary cough headache
G44.84	Primary exertional headache
G44.85	Primary stabbing headache
G44.89	Other headache syndrome
G89.0	Central pain syndrome
G89.11	Acute pain due to trauma
G89.12	Acute post-thoracotomy pain
G89.18	Other acute postprocedural pain
G89.21	Chronic pain due to trauma
G89.22	Chronic post-thoracotomy pain
G89.29	Other chronic pain
G89.3	Neoplasm related pain (acute) (chronic)
G89.4	Chronic pain syndrome
K08.89	Other specified disorders of teeth and supporting structures [tooth pain]
M16.0	Bilateral primary osteoarthritis of hip
M16.10	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, unspecified hip
M16.11	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, right hip
M16.12	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, left hip
M16.2	Bilateral osteoarthritis resulting from hip dysplasia
M16.30	Unilateral osteoarthritis resulting from hip dysplasia, unspecified hip
M16.31	Unilateral osteoarthritis resulting from hip dysplasia, right hip
M16.32	Unilateral osteoarthritis resulting from hip dysplasia, left hip
M16.4	Bilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis of hip
M16.50	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, unspecified hip
M16.51	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, right hip
M16.52	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, left hip
M16.6	Other bilateral secondary osteoarthritis of hip
M16.7	Other unilateral secondary osteoarthritis of hip

M16.9	Osteoarthritis of hip, unspecified
M17.0	Bilateral primary osteoarthritis of knee
M17.10	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, unspecified knee
M17.11	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, right knee
M17.12	Unilateral primary osteoarthritis, left knee
M17.2	Bilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis of knee
M17.30	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, unspecified knee
M17.31	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, right knee
M17.32	Unilateral post-traumatic osteoarthritis, left knee
M17.4	Other bilateral secondary osteoarthritis of knee
M17.5	Other unilateral secondary osteoarthritis of knee
M17.9	Osteoarthritis of knee, unspecified
M19.011	Primary osteoarthritis, right shoulder
M19.012	Primary osteoarthritis, left shoulder
M19.019	Primary osteoarthritis, unspecified shoulder
M19.021	Primary osteoarthritis, right elbow
M19.022	Primary osteoarthritis, left elbow
M19.029	Primary osteoarthritis, unspecified elbow
M19.031	Primary osteoarthritis, right wrist
M19.032	Primary osteoarthritis, left wrist
M19.039	Primary osteoarthritis, unspecified wrist
M19.041	Primary osteoarthritis, right hand
M19.042	Primary osteoarthritis, left hand
M19.049	Primary osteoarthritis, unspecified hand
M19.071	Primary osteoarthritis, right ankle and foot
M19.072	Primary osteoarthritis, left ankle and foot
M19.079	Primary osteoarthritis, unspecified ankle and foot
M25.511	Pain in right shoulder
M25.512	Pain in left shoulder
M25.519	Pain in unspecified shoulder
M25.521	Pain in right elbow
M25.522	Pain in left elbow
M25.529	Pain in unspecified elbow
M25.531	Pain in right wrist
M25.532	Pain in left wrist
M25.539	Pain in unspecified wrist
M25.551	Pain in right hip
M25.552	Pain in left hip
M25.559	Pain in unspecified hip
M25.561	Pain in right knee
M25.562	Pain in left knee

M25.569	Pain in unspecified knee
M25.571	Pain in right ankle and joints of right foot
M25.572	Pain in left ankle and joints of left foot
M25.579	Pain in unspecified ankle and joints of unspecified foot
M26.601	Right temporomandibular joint disorder, unspecified
M26.602	Left temporomandibular joint disorder, unspecified
M26.603	Bilateral temporomandibular joint disorder, unspecified
M26.609	Unspecified temporomandibular joint disorder, unspecified side
M26.611	Adhesions and ankylosis of right temporomandibular joint
M26.612	Adhesions and ankylosis of left temporomandibular joint
M26.613	Adhesions and ankylosis of bilateral temporomandibular joint
M26.619	Adhesions and ankylosis of temporomandibular joint, unspecified side
M26.621	Arthralgia of right temporomandibular joint
M26.622	Arthralgia of left temporomandibular joint
M26.623	Arthralgia of bilateral temporomandibular joint
M26.629	Arthralgia of temporomandibular joint, unspecified side
M26.631	Articular disc disorder of right temporomandibular joint
M26.632	Articular disc disorder of left temporomandibular joint
M26.633	Articular disc disorder of bilateral temporomandibular joint
M26.639	Articular disc disorder of temporomandibular joint, unspecified side
M26.69	Other specified disorders of temporomandibular joint
M53.0	Cervicocranial syndrome
M53.1	Cervicobrachial syndrome
M53.82	Other specified dorsopathies, cervical region
M54.2	Cervicalgia
M54.40	Lumbago with sciatica, unspecified side
M54.41	Lumbago with sciatica, right side
M54.42	Lumbago with sciatica, left side
M54.6	Pain in thoracic spine
M54.89	Other dorsalgia
M60.9	Myositis, unspecified
M62.40	Contracture of muscle, unspecified site
M77.00	Medial epicondylitis, unspecified elbow
M77.01	Medial epicondylitis, right elbow
M77.02	Medial epicondylitis, left elbow
M77.10	Lateral epicondylitis, unspecified elbow
M77.11	Lateral epicondylitis, right elbow
M77.12	Lateral epicondylitis, left elbow
M79.1	Myalgia
M79.601	Pain in right arm
M79.602	Pain in left arm

M79.603	Pain in arm, unspecified
M79.604	Pain in right leg
M79.605	Pain in left leg
M79.606	Pain in leg, unspecified
M79.609	Pain in unspecified limb
M79.641	Pain in right hand
M79.642	Pain in left hand
M79.643	Pain in unspecified hand
M79.644	Pain in right finger(s)
M79.645	Pain in left finger(s)
M79.646	Pain in unspecified finger(s)
O21.0	Mild hyperemesis gravidarum
O21.1	Hyperemesis gravidarum with metabolic disturbance
O21.2	Late vomiting of pregnancy
O21.8	Other vomiting complicating pregnancy
O21.9	Vomiting of pregnancy, unspecified
R11.0	Nausea
R11.10	Vomiting, unspecified
R11.11	Vomiting without nausea
R11.2	Nausea with vomiting, unspecified
R51	Headache
R68.84	Jaw pain
T45.1X5A	Adverse effect of antineoplastic and immunosuppressive drugs, initial encounter
T45.1X5D	Adverse effect of antineoplastic and immunosuppressive drugs, subsequent encounter
T45.1X5S	Adverse effect of antineoplastic and immunosuppressive drugs, sequela
Z98.890	Other specified postprocedural states

References

CMS. National Coverage Determination. Acupuncture. [https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/\(S\(cnbxfa45qfwykj45ydhic5qj\)\)/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=11&ncdver=1&NCAId=2&ver=5&NcaName=Acupuncture+for+Nausea+after+Chemotherapy+and+Post-operative+Pain&bc=AAAAABAAEAgA&](https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/(S(cnbxfa45qfwykj45ydhic5qj))/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=11&ncdver=1&NCAId=2&ver=5&NcaName=Acupuncture+for+Nausea+after+Chemotherapy+and+Post-operative+Pain&bc=AAAAABAAEAgA&). Accessed April 22, 2024.

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CMS. National Coverage Determination. Acupuncture for Osteoarthritis. <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=284&ncdver=1&bc=AAAAGAAAAAAAAA%3d%3d&>. Accessed April 22, 2024.

Specialty matched clinical peer review.