

Acupuncture

EmblemHealth Medicare HMO Plans with Acupuncture Benefit

Last Review Date: April 14, 2023

Number: MG.MM.ME.70cC3v2

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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)

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| 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) | |

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| during IVF treatment cycle) | Xerostomia |
| Inflammatory bowel diseases (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis) | Whiplash |
| Insomnia (including cancer-related insomnia) | |

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

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| 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 |

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| 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 (eff. 10/1/2022) |

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 18, 2023.

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Specialty matched clinical peer review.