POLICY STATEMENT:

I. An abdominoplasty, “tummy tuck”, or belt lipectomy is considered a cosmetic procedure and therefore, not medically necessary.

II. A panniculectomy is considered medically appropriate when there is documentation of a significant functional impairment; such as persistent cellulitis, abscess, or skin ulceration that has been refractory, not recurrent (e.g., clears up then recurs), to medical therapy for at least six months, including a minimum of two 10-day courses of appropriate systemic antibiotic therapy.

III. Panniculectomy performed concurrently with a ventral hernia repair is considered medically necessary if there is redundant skin/fat that is infected, is in the immediate vicinity of the hernia, and the surgeon believes it is likely bacterial seeding of implanted mesh used during the hernia repair may occur.

IV. Panniculectomy and/or abdominoplasty solely for the correction of poorly fitting clothes, problems with hygiene, or difficulty exercising are considered not medically necessary, as no functional deficit exists.

V. Panniculectomy is not medically necessary for the treatment of superficial inflammation or infection controlled with topical medications.

VI. Panniculectomy and/or abdominoplasty solely for the correction of low back pain is considered not medically necessary, since the cause of low back pain in most individuals is multi-factorial and the primary cause may not be the abdominal panniculus.

Refer to Corporate Medical Policy# 7.01.11 regarding Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures.

POLICY GUIDELINES:

I. Preoperative photographs are an absolute requirement for determination of medical appropriateness.

II. The criteria for panniculectomy apply regardless of the cause of the excess fatty tissue and/or redundant skin. These criteria apply to removal of fatty tissue and/or redundant (excessive) skin caused by obesity and also apply to weight loss due to any reason, including bariatric surgery.

DESCRIPTION:

Abdominoplasty, also referred to as a “tummy tuck”, is a surgical procedure, which tightens a lax anterior abdominal wall caused by diastasis recti (the separation of the 2 rectus muscles along the median line of the abdominal wall) and removes excess fat and abdominal skin. This procedure reduces the appearance of a protruding abdomen, giving a flatter, firmer, tighter abdomen and thin waist and provides an overall improvement in the person’s shape and figure. Men and women who continue to have fat deposits and loose abdominal skin that won’t respond to diet and/or exercise or women with slack muscles and skin due to multiple pregnancies or large babies are the usual candidates for this procedure. Liposuction may be performed in conjunction with a “tummy tuck” to further sculpt the abdomen or remove fat from other areas such as the hip.
Belt lipectomy, a procedure that combines abdominoplasty with circumferential excision of skin and fat, is often more ideal for patients with circumferential truncal excess. Belt lipectomy improves abdominal contour, abdominal wall laxity, mons pubis ptosis, back rolls, waist contour, and buttocks contour. Initially, the procedure was performed on post-weight-reduction patients only, but its indications have been extended to three other groups: patients who were 30 to 50 pounds overweight, patients of normal weight who desired a significant overall truncal improvement, and obese patients with persistent intraabdominal excess.

Panniculectomy is the surgical resection of the overhanging “apron” of redundant skin and fat in the lower abdominal area. A panniculus is often seen in men or women who have had significant weight loss or in morbidly obese patients. The panniculus can cause difficulty in the fit of clothing, interference with personal hygiene, impaired ambulation, and be associated with lower back pain or pain in the panniculus itself. The redundant skin folds are predisposed to areas of intertrigo, which can give rise to infections of the skin (e.g., fungal dermatitis, folliculitis, subcutaneous abscesses) or panniculitis.

A panniculectomy may be performed in conjunction with other scheduled intra-abdominal surgery, such as a hysterectomy in obese patients, to improve surgical access and wound healing. Umbilical, ventral or other abdominal hernias may also be present and require surgical repair. The presence of diastasis recti does not imply the presence of a ventral hernia.

CODES:  
Number | Description  
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Eligibility for reimbursement is based upon the benefits set forth in the member’s subscriber contract.  
CODES MAY NOT BE COVERED UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. PLEASE READ THE POLICY AND GUIDELINES STATEMENTS CAREFULLY.  
Codes may not be all inclusive as the AMA and CMS code updates may occur more frequently than policy updates.

CPT:  
15830 | Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); abdomen, infraumbilical panniculectomy  
15834 | hip  
15847 | Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy), abdomen (e.g. abdominoplasty) (includes umbilical transposition and fascial plication)  
15877 | Suction assisted lipectomy; trunk  

HCPCS:  
No code(s)  

ICD9:  
553.1 | Umbilical hernia  
553.2 | Ventral hernia  
682.2 | Cellulitis, trunk  
695.89 | Intertrigo  
707.9 | Chronic ulcer of the skin  
724.2 | Low back pain  
729.39 | Panniculitis  

ICD10:  
K42.9 | Umbilical hernia without obstruction or gangrene

*Proprietary Information of Excellus Health Plan, Inc.*
K43.2 Incisional hernia without obstruction or gangrene
K43.9 Ventral hernia without obstruction or gangrene
K46.9 Unspecified abdominal hernia without obstruction or gangrene
L02.211-L02.219 Cutaneous abscess of trunk (code range)
L03.311-L03.319 Cellulitis of trunk (code range)
L03.321-L03.326 Acute lymphangitis of trunk (code range)
L03.329 Acute lymphangitis of trunk, unspecified
L26 Exfoliative dermatitis
L30.4 Erythema intertrigo
L53.8 Other specified erythematous conditions
L54 Erythema in diseases classified elsewhere
L57.4 Cutis laxa senilis
L66.4 Folliculitis ulerythematosa reticulate
L90.4 Acrodermatitis chronica atrophicans
L90.8 Other atrophic disorders of skin
L91.8 Other hypertrophic disorders of the skin
L95.1 Erythema elevatum diutinum
L98.491-L98.499 Non-pressure chronic ulcer of skin of other sites (code range)
M54.5 Low back pain
M79.3 Panniculitis, unspecified

REFERENCES:


KEY WORDS:
Abdominoplasty, Belt Lipectomy, Lipectomy, Panniculectomy, Tummy Tuck.

**CMS COVERAGE FOR MEDICARE PRODUCT MEMBERS**

Based upon review, abdominoplasty and/or panniculectomy are not addressed in a National or Local CMS coverage determination or policy.

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