

Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures

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[➔ Instructions for Use](#)

Table of Contents	Page
Application	1
Coverage Rationale	2
Definitions	2
Applicable Codes	2
Description of Services	6
Benefit Considerations	6
U.S. Food and Drug Administration	6
References	6
Policy History/Revision Information	6
Instructions for Use	7

- | Related Community Plan Policies |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast Reconstruction • Breast Reduction Surgery • Brow Ptosis and Eyelid Repair • Gender Dysphoria Treatment • Liposuction for Lipedema • Omnibus Codes • Orthognathic (Jaw) Surgery • Panniculectomy and Body Contouring Procedures • Pectus Deformity Repair • Plagiocephaly and Craniosynostosis Treatment • Rhinoplasty and Other Nasal Procedures • Surgical and Ablative Procedures for Venous Insufficiency and Varicose Veins • Treatment of Temporomandibular Joint Disorders |
| Commercial Policy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures |

Application

This Medical Policy does not apply to the states listed below; refer to the state-specific policy/guideline, if noted:

State	Policy/Guideline
Indiana	None
Kentucky	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Kentucky Only)
Louisiana	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Louisiana Only)
Mississippi	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Mississippi Only)
Nebraska	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Nebraska Only)
New Jersey	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for New Jersey Only)
New Mexico	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for New Mexico Only)
North Carolina	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for North Carolina Only)
Ohio	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Ohio Only)
Pennsylvania	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Pennsylvania Only)
Tennessee	Cosmetic and Reconstructive Procedures (for Tennessee Only)

Reconstructive Procedures

A procedure is considered Reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following criteria are met:

- There is documentation that the physical abnormality and/or physiological abnormality is causing a [Functional Impairment](#) that requires correction; and
- The proposed treatment is of proven efficacy and is deemed likely to significantly improve or restore the individual's physiological function

Note: [Microtia](#) repair is considered Reconstructive although no Functional Impairment may be documented.

Tissue Transfer (Flap) Repair

Flap repair is considered Reconstructive and medically necessary in certain circumstances. For medical necessity clinical coverage criteria, refer to the InterQual® CP: Procedures, Tissue Transfer (Flap).

[Click here to view the InterQual® criteria.](#)

Cosmetic Procedures

Cosmetic Procedures are generally not covered. Cosmetic Procedures are procedures or services that change or improve appearance without significantly improving physiological function. A procedure is considered to be a Cosmetic Procedure when it does not meet the reconstructive criteria in the Reconstructive Procedures section above.

Procedures that correct an anatomical congenital anomaly without improving or restoring physiologic function are generally considered Cosmetic Procedures. The fact that a covered person may suffer psychological consequences or socially avoidant behavior as a result of an injury, sickness or congenital anomaly does not classify surgery (or other procedures done to relieve such consequences or behavior) as a [Reconstructive Procedure](#).

Definitions

The following definitions may not apply to all plans. Refer to the federal, state, and contractual requirements for applicable definitions.

Cosmetic Surgery: Cosmetic Surgery is performed to reshape normal structures of the body in order to enhance an individual's appearance and self-esteem (Freeman, 2023).

Functional or Physical Impairment: A Functional or Physical or physiological Impairment causes deviation from the normal function of a tissue or organ. This results in a significantly limited, impaired, or delayed capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions.

Microtia: Microtia is a birth defect of a baby's ear. Microtia happens when the external ear is small and not formed properly. The defect can vary from being barely noticeable to being a major problem with how the ear forms. Usually, Microtia affects how the baby's ear looks, but the parts of the ear inside the head are not affected (CDC., 2023).

Reconstructive Surgery: Reconstructive Surgery is carried out on atypical structures of the body, caused by congenital defects, developmental abnormalities, trauma, infection, tumors, or disease. Reconstructive Surgery is commonly performed to restore function but may also be performed to approximate a normal appearance (Freeman, 2023).

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by federal, state, or contractual requirements and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

CPT/HCPCS Code	Description
The following codes may be cosmetic; review is required to determine if considered cosmetic or reconstructive.	
11920	Tattooing, intradermal introduction of insoluble opaque pigments to correct color defects of skin, including micropigmentation; 6.0 sq cm or less
11921	Tattooing, intradermal introduction of insoluble opaque pigments to correct color defects of skin, including micropigmentation; 6.1 to 20.0 sq cm
11922	Tattooing, intradermal introduction of insoluble opaque pigments to correct color defects of skin, including micropigmentation; each additional 20.0 sq cm, or part thereof (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
11960	Insertion of tissue expander(s) for other than breast, including subsequent expansion
14000	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, trunk; defect 10 sq cm or less
14001	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, trunk; defect 10.1 sq cm to 30.0 sq cm
14020	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, scalp, arms and/or legs; defect 10 sq cm or less
14021	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, scalp, arms and/or legs; defect 10.1 sq cm to 30.0 sq cm
14040	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, forehead, cheeks, chin, mouth, neck, axillae, genitalia, hands and/or feet; defect 10 sq cm or less
14041	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, forehead, cheeks, chin, mouth, neck, axillae, genitalia, hands and/or feet; defect 10.1 sq cm to 30.0 sq cm
14060	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, eyelids, nose, ears and/or lips; defect 10 sq cm or less
14061	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, eyelids, nose, ears and/or lips; defect 10.1 sq cm to 30.0 sq cm
14301	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, any area; defect 30.1 sq cm to 60.0 sq cm
14302	Adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement, any area; each additional 30.0 sq cm, or part thereof (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
15570	Formation of direct or tubed pedicle, with or without transfer; trunk
15572	Formation of direct or tubed pedicle, with or without transfer; scalp, arms, or legs
15574	Formation of direct or tubed pedicle, with or without transfer; forehead, cheeks, chin, mouth, neck, axillae, genitalia, hands or feet
15730	Midface flap (i.e., zygomaticofacial flap) with preservation of vascular pedicle(s)
15731	Forehead flap with preservation of vascular pedicle (e.g., axial pattern flap, paramedian forehead flap)
15733	Muscle, myocutaneous, or fasciocutaneous flap; head and neck with named vascular pedicle (i.e., buccinators, genioglossus, temporalis, masseter, sternocleidomastoid, levator scapulae)
15734	Muscle, myocutaneous, or fasciocutaneous flap; trunk
15736	Muscle, myocutaneous, or fasciocutaneous flap; upper extremity
15738	Muscle, myocutaneous, or fasciocutaneous flap; lower extremity
15740	Flap; island pedicle requiring identification and dissection of an anatomically named axial vessel
15756	Free muscle or myocutaneous flap with microvascular anastomosis
15769	Grafting of autologous soft tissue, other, harvested by direct excision (e.g., fat, dermis, fascia)
15771	Grafting of autologous fat harvested by liposuction technique to trunk, breasts, scalp, arms, and/or legs; 50 cc or less injectate Note: Refer to the Medical Policy titled Breast Reconstruction .
15772	Grafting of autologous fat harvested by liposuction technique to trunk, breasts, scalp, arms, and/or legs; each additional 50 cc injectate, or part thereof (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure) Note: Refer to the Medical Policy titled Breast Reconstruction .

CPT/HCPCS Code	Description
The following codes may be cosmetic; review is required to determine if considered cosmetic or reconstructive.	
15773	Grafting of autologous fat harvested by liposuction technique to face, eyelids, mouth, neck, ears, orbits, genitalia, hands, and/or feet; 25 cc or less injectate
15774	Grafting of autologous fat harvested by liposuction technique to face, eyelids, mouth, neck, ears, orbits, genitalia, hands, and/or feet; each additional 25 cc injectate, or part thereof (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
17999	Unlisted procedure, skin, mucous membrane and subcutaneous tissue
19316	Mastopexy
19325	Breast augmentation with implant
21137	Reduction forehead; contouring only
21138	Reduction forehead; contouring and application of prosthetic material or bone graft (includes obtaining autograft)
21139	Reduction forehead; contouring and setback of anterior frontal sinus wall
21172	Reconstruction superior-lateral orbital rim and lower forehead, advancement or alteration, with or without grafts (includes obtaining autografts)
21175	Reconstruction, bifrontal, superior-lateral orbital rims and lower forehead, advancement or alteration (e.g., plagiocephaly, trigonocephaly, brachycephaly), with or without grafts (includes obtaining autografts)
21179	Reconstruction, entire or majority of forehead and/or supraorbital rims; with grafts (allograft or prosthetic material)
21180	Reconstruction, entire or majority of forehead and/or supraorbital rims; with autograft (includes obtaining grafts)
21181	Reconstruction by contouring of benign tumor of cranial bones (e.g., fibrous dysplasia), extracranial
21182	Reconstruction of orbital walls, rims, forehead, nasoethmoid complex following intra- and extracranial excision of benign tumor of cranial bone (e.g., fibrous dysplasia), with multiple autografts (includes obtaining grafts); total area of bone grafting less than 40 sq cm
21183	Reconstruction of orbital walls, rims, forehead, nasoethmoid complex following intra- and extracranial excision of benign tumor of cranial bone (e.g., fibrous dysplasia), with multiple autografts (includes obtaining grafts); total area of bone grafting greater than 40 sq cm but less than 80 sq cm
21184	Reconstruction of orbital walls, rims, forehead, nasoethmoid complex following intra- and extracranial excision of benign tumor of cranial bone (e.g., fibrous dysplasia), with multiple autografts (includes obtaining grafts); total area of bone grafting greater than 80 sq cm
21208	Osteoplasty, facial bones; augmentation (autograft, allograft, or prosthetic implant)
21209	Osteoplasty, facial bones; reduction
21230	Graft; rib cartilage, autogenous, to face, chin, nose or ear (includes obtaining graft)
21235	Graft; ear cartilage, autogenous, to nose or ear (includes obtaining graft)
21248	Reconstruction of mandible or maxilla, endosteal implant (e.g., blade, cylinder); partial
21249	Reconstruction of mandible or maxilla, endosteal implant (e.g., blade, cylinder); complete
21255	Reconstruction of zygomatic arch and glenoid fossa with bone and cartilage (includes obtaining autografts)
21256	Reconstruction of orbit with osteotomies (extracranial) and with bone grafts (includes obtaining autografts) (e.g., micro-ophthalmia)
21260	Periorbital osteotomies for orbital hypertelorism, with bone grafts; extracranial approach
21261	Periorbital osteotomies for orbital hypertelorism, with bone grafts; combined intra- and extracranial approach
21263	Periorbital osteotomies for orbital hypertelorism, with bone grafts; with forehead advancement
21267	Orbital repositioning, periorbital osteotomies, unilateral, with bone grafts; extracranial approach

CPT/HCPCS Code	Description
The following codes may be cosmetic; review is required to determine if considered cosmetic or reconstructive.	
21268	Orbital repositioning, periorbital osteotomies, unilateral, with bone grafts; combined intra- and extracranial approach
21275	Secondary revision of orbitocraniofacial reconstruction
21295	Reduction of masseter muscle and bone (e.g., for treatment of benign masseteric hypertrophy); extraoral approach
21296	Reduction of masseter muscle and bone (e.g., for treatment of benign masseteric hypertrophy); intraoral approach
21299	Unlisted craniofacial and maxillofacial procedure
28344	Reconstruction, toe(s); polydactyly
30540	Repair choanal atresia; intranasal
30545	Repair choanal atresia; transpalatine
30560	Lysis intranasal synechia
30620	Septal or other intranasal dermatoplasty (does not include obtaining graft)
L8600	Implantable breast prosthesis, silicone or equal
L8607	Injectable bulking agent for vocal cord medialization, 0.1 ml, includes shipping and necessary supplies
Q2026	Injection, Radiesse, 0.1 ml
Q2028	Injection, sculptra, 0.5 mg
The following codes are considered cosmetic; the codes do not improve a Functional, Physical, or physiological Impairment.	
11950	Subcutaneous injection of filling material (e.g., collagen); 1 cc or less
11951	Subcutaneous injection of filling material (e.g., collagen); 1.1 to 5.0 cc
11952	Subcutaneous injection of filling material (e.g., collagen); 5.1 to 10.0 cc
11954	Subcutaneous injection of filling material (e.g., collagen); over 10.0 cc
15775	Punch graft for hair transplant; 1 to 15 punch grafts
15776	Punch graft for hair transplant; more than 15 punch grafts
15780	Dermabrasion; total face (e.g., for acne scarring, fine wrinkling, rhytids, general keratosis)
15781	Dermabrasion; segmental, face
15782	Dermabrasion; regional, other than face
15783	Dermabrasion; superficial, any site (e.g., tattoo removal)
15786	Abrasion; single lesion (e.g., keratosis, scar)
15787	Abrasion; each additional 4 lesions or less (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
15788	Chemical peel, facial; epidermal
15789	Chemical peel, facial; dermal
15792	Chemical peel, nonfacial; epidermal
15793	Chemical peel, nonfacial; dermal
15819	Cervicoplasty
15824	Rhytidectomy; forehead
15825	Rhytidectomy; neck with platysmal tightening (platysmal flap, P-flap)
15826	Rhytidectomy; glabellar frown lines
15828	Rhytidectomy; cheek, chin, and neck
15829	Rhytidectomy; superficial musculoaponeurotic system (SMAS) flap
17380	Electrolysis epilation, each 30 minutes

CPT/HCPCS Code	Description
The following codes are considered cosmetic; the codes do not improve a Functional, Physical, or physiological Impairment.	
21270	Malar augmentation, prosthetic material
69090	Ear piercing
69300	Otoplasty, protruding ear, with or without size reduction
J0591	Injection, deoxycholic acid, 1 mg

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Description of Services

Reconstructive procedures treat a physical and/or physiological abnormality related to an injury, illness, development abnormality, or congenital anomaly to improve or restore physiologic function. Whereas Cosmetic Procedures are performed to change or improve appearance without improving physiological function. (ASPS, 2023).

Benefit Considerations

Some states require benefit coverage for services that UnitedHealthcare considers Cosmetic Procedures, such as repair of external congenital anomalies in the absence of a Functional Impairment. Refer to the federal, state, and contractual requirements.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

This section is to be used for informational purposes only. FDA approval alone is not a basis for coverage.

Many cosmetic and reconstructive interventions are surgical procedures and are not subject to FDA approval. However, devices and instruments used during the procedures may require FDA approval. Refer to the following website for additional information: <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfPMN/pmn.cfm>. (Accessed April 1, 2022)

References

American Medical Association (AMA). CPT® Assistant Online. Available at: <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/cpt>. Accessed March 16, 2023.

American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) available at: <http://www.plasticsurgery.org/>. Accessed April 1, 2022.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, February 23). *Facts about anotia/microtia*. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/anotia-microtia.html#:~:text=anotia%20and%20microtia%3F-.Anotia%20and%20microtia%20are%20birth%20defects%20of%20a%20baby%27s%20ear,first%20few%20weeks%20of%20pregnancy>. Accessed March 20, 2023.

Freeman, M. (2023). The differences between plastic surgery and cosmetic surgery and why board certification matters. American Society of Plastic Surgeons. Available at: <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/news/articles/the-differences-between-plastic-surgery-and-cosmetic-surgery-and-why-board-certification-matters>. Accessed March 16, 2023.

UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company Generic Certificate of Coverage 2018.

Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
07/01/2024	<p>Application New Mexico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added language to indicate this policy does not apply to the state of New Mexico; refer to the state-specific policy version
03/01/2024	<p>Related Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated reference link to reflect current policy title for <i>Treatment of Temporomandibular Joint Disorders</i>

Date	Summary of Changes
11/01/2023	<p>Related Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added reference link to the Medical Policy titled <i>Liposuction for Lipedema</i> <p>Coverage Rationale</p> <p>Cosmetic Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added language to indicate Cosmetic Procedures are procedures or services that change or improve appearance without significantly improving physiological function; a procedure is considered to be a Cosmetic Procedure when it does not meet the reconstructive criteria in the <i>Reconstructive Procedures</i> section [of the policy] Removed list of unproven and not medically necessary Cosmetic Procedures <p>Definitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed definition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent Tissue Transfer Congenital Anomaly Cosmetic Procedures Injury Medically Necessary Reconstructive Procedures Sickness Updated definition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmetic Surgery Microtia Reconstructive Surgery <p>Applicable Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed coding clarifications and CPT coding tips <p>Benefit Considerations (new to policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added language to indicate some states require benefit coverage for services that UnitedHealthcare considers Cosmetic Procedures, such as repair of external congenital anomalies in the absence of a Functional Impairment; refer to the federal, state, and contractual requirements <p>Supporting Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated <i>Description of Services</i> and <i>References</i> sections to reflect the most current information Archived previous policy version CS027.Y

Instructions for Use

This Medical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage must be referenced as the terms of the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage may differ from the standard benefit plan. In the event of a conflict, the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage govern. Before using this policy, please check the federal, state or contractual requirements for benefit plan coverage. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Medical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

UnitedHealthcare may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the InterQual® criteria, to assist us in administering health benefits. The UnitedHealthcare Medical Policies are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.