Total Ankle Replacement

Medical Coverage Policy

Original Effective Date: 02/21/2001
Revised Date: 08/30/2011
Review Date: 08/30/2011
Policy Number: CLPD-0382-004

Change Summary: Updated Disclaimer, Coverage Determination, Coverage Limitations, Background, Medical Alternatives, Medical Terms, References

When printed, the version of this document becomes uncontrolled because Humana’s documents are updated regularly. Do not rely on printed copies for the most up-to-date version. Refer to http://apps.humana.com/tad/tad_new/home.aspx to verify this is the current version before each use.

Disclaimer
State and federal law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific inclusions/exclusions, take precedence over clinical policy and must be considered first in determining eligibility for coverage. Coverage may also differ for our Medicare and/or Medicaid members based on any applicable Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) coverage statements including National Coverage Determinations (NCD), Local Medical Review Policies (LMRP), and/or Local Coverage Determinations. See the CMS web site at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/. The member's health plan benefits, in effect on the date services are rendered, must be used. Clinical policy is not intended to preempt the judgment of the reviewing Medical Director or dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise their medical judgment in rendering the most appropriate care. Identification of selected brand names of devices, tests, and procedures in a Medical Coverage Policy are for reference only and is not an endorsement of any one device, test or procedure over another. Clinical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update this policy periodically. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any shape or form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without permission from Humana Inc.

Description
A total ankle replacement, also known as an ankle arthroplasty, was designed as an alternative to fusion surgery in those patients with end-stage degenerative joint disease who have loss of ankle function and pain that has not improved with conservative treatment. Total ankle replacement involves the use of a prosthetic joint in place of an injured ankle joint. Examples of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved total ankle replacement devices include, but may not be limited to, Agility™ LP Total Ankle System, Eclipse Total Ankle Implant, Salto Talaris Total Ankle Prosthesis, Scandinavian Total Ankle Replacement System (S.T.A.R.), and Topez Total Ankle Replacement.

This is a major surgery, requiring either general or spinal anesthesia. The surgeon makes either one or two incisions in the ankle, moves aside the nerves, blood vessels, and tendons, and enters the ankle joint capsule itself. The surgeon next makes incisions into the tibia, fibula (the bones of the lower leg), and top of the talus (the ankle bone) to allow for proper fitting of the implant components. The surgeon removes a small amount of the tibia and
fibula to allow room for the prosthesis itself. To stop motion between the tibia and fibula, which could cause the artificial ankle joint to loosen, the surgeon places screws between the two bones, and also a bone graft to create a ligamentous fusion at the site. One component is attached to the tibia/fibula fusion site, and the other is attached to the ankle bone. The surgery is quite lengthy, requiring from two to six hours to perform, depending on the complexity.

**Coverage Determination**

Humana members **MAY** be eligible under the Plan for a **total ankle replacement** when using an FDA approved device and **ALL** of the following indications are met:

- Skeletally mature*; **AND**
- Ankle joint damage due to severe rheumatoid, post-traumatic, or degenerative arthritis (osteoarthritis); **AND**
- Failure of at least **SIX** months of conservative treatment including:
  - Anti-inflammatory medications; **AND**
  - Physical therapy; **AND**
  - Splints or orthotic devices; **AND**
- At least **ONE** of the following:
  - Arthritis in adjacent joints (i.e., subtalar or midfoot); **OR**
  - Arthrodesis of the contralateral ankle; **OR**
  - Severe arthritis of the contralateral ankle

* Refers to a system of fused skeletal bones, which occurs when bone growth ceases after puberty; for females, this generally occurs around age 16, and for males, around 18 years of age.

**Coverage Limitations**

Humana members may **NOT** be eligible under the Plan for **total ankle replacement** for any indications other than those listed above. This technology is considered experimental/investigational as it is not identified as widely used and generally accepted for any other proposed use as reported in nationally recognized peer-reviewed medical literature published in the English language.

See the [DISCLAIMER](#). All Humana member health plan contracts are **NOT** the same. All legislation/regulations on this subject may not be included. This document is for informational purposes only.
Contraindications include, but may not be limited to:

- Absence of the medial or lateral malleolus or both; **OR**
- Active local or systemic infection; **OR**
- Charcot’s neuropathy or other peripheral neuropathy; **OR**
- Extensive vascular necrosis of the talar dome; **OR**
- Insufficient bone or musculature such that proper component positioning or alignment is not possible; **OR**
- Insufficient bone (i.e., osteopenia, osteoporosis) or osteonecrosis; **OR**
- Insufficient ligament support; **OR**
- Neurologic impairment with dynamic muscular imbalance across the ankle joint; **OR**
- Poor skin condition secondary to surgical scars or trauma; **OR**
- Prior fusion of the ankle; **OR**
- Severe deformity in adjacent ankle structures, including hindfoot, forefoot, and knee joint; **OR**
- Severe deformity in which proper alignment of the ankle cannot be restored; **OR**
- Vascular insufficiency in the affected limb; **OR**
- Weight greater than 250 pounds

**Background**

You can learn more about osteoarthritis and degenerative joint disease from the following sites:

- American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) -
When printed, the version of this document becomes uncontrolled because Humana’s documents are updated regularly. Do not rely on printed copies for the most up-to-date version. Refer to http://apps.humana.com/tad/tad_new/home.aspx to verify this is the current version before each use.

http://www.aaos.org

- American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons - http://www.acfas.org
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) - http://www.niams.nih.gov

Medical Alternatives

Alternatives to total ankle replacement include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Ankle fusion (arthrodesis)

To make the best health decision for your individual needs, consult your physician.

Provider Claims Codes

All provider claims codes surrounding this topic may not be included in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT® Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27702</td>
<td>Arthroplasty, ankle; with implant (total ankle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27703</td>
<td>Arthroplasty, ankle; revision, total ankle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27704</td>
<td>Removal of ankle implant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category III CPT® Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No codes identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS® Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No codes identified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When printed, the version of this document becomes uncontrolled because Humana’s documents are updated regularly. Do not rely on printed copies for the most up-to-date version. Refer to http://apps.humana.com/tad/tad_new/home.aspx to verify this is the current version before each use.

### ICD.9® Procedure Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81.56</td>
<td>Total ankle replacement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Medical Terms

**Adjacent** – Next, side by side, or abutting.

**Anesthesia** - Medication used before or during surgery or a medical procedure that prevents pain from being felt, or provides decreased consciousness.

**Anti-Inflammatory** - Acting to reduce certain signs of inflammation, as swelling, tenderness, fever, and pain.

**Arthrodesis** – See “Fusion”.

**Cartilage** - A tough, elastic, fibrous connective tissue found in various parts of the body, such as the joints, outer ear, and larynx.

**Charcot neuropathy** - A progressive deterioration of a weight-bearing joint, usually in the foot or ankle.

**Chronic** - Refers to lasting for a long period of time or marked by frequent recurrence.

**Connective tissue** - A firm, elastic, flexible type of connective tissue of a translucent whitish or yellowish color.

**Contralateral** – Pertaining to, situated on, or coordinated with the opposite side.

**Degenerative Joint Disease** - Another name for osteoarthritis.

**Fibula** - The outer and thinner of the two bones of the human leg, extending from the knee to the ankle.
Forefoot - The front part of the human foot.

Fusion - Procedure when two or more bones are joined together using hardware, such as screws and pins, and bone grafts.

Graft - A portion of living tissue surgically transplanted from one part of an individual to another or from one individual to another, for its adhesion and growth.

Hindfoot - The back of the foot.

Lateral - Of or pertaining to the side.

Ligament - Fibrous connective tissue at a joint that connects one bone to another.

Ligamentous - Refers to a ligament, or like a ligament.

Malleolus - The bony protuberance on either side of the ankle, at the lower end of the fibula or of the tibula.

Medial - situated in or pertaining to the middle.

Musculature - The system or arrangement of muscles in a body or a body part.

Necrosis - The death of living cells or tissues.

Neuropathy - A general term denoting functional disturbances and/or pathological changes in the peripheral nervous system.

Orthotic - The provision and use of artificial or mechanical aids, such as braces, to prevent or assist movement of weak or injured joints or muscles.

Osteoarthritis - The most common form of arthritis, usually occurring after middle age, marked by chronic breakdown of cartilage in the joints leading to pain, stiffness and swelling.

Osteonecrosis - Condition resulting from poor blood supply to an area of bone causing bone death.
Peripheral - Of, relating to, or situated near the surface of the body.

Physical Therapy - Treatment of physical dysfunction or injury by the therapeutic exercise and the application of modalities, intended to restore or facilitate normal function or development.

Post Traumatic - Occurring after physical or psychological trauma.

Prosthesis - Artificial organ or part, such as a joint, to replace the one that is malfunctioning or missing.

Puberty - The period of age at which a person is first capable of sexual reproduction of offspring; in common law, presumed to be 14 years in the male and 12 years in the female.

Splints - To protect against pain by reducing the motion of patient; to support and immobilize (as a broken bone) with a splint.

Subtalar – Situated or occurring beneath the talus.

Systemic - Pertaining to or affecting the body as a whole.

Talar dome - The upper part of the talus is called the talar dome. The dome is made up of bone that is covered by a layer of articular cartilage. Articular cartilage is a smooth shiny material that allows the ankle bone to slide easily over each other as the ankle moves.

Talus - The bone of the ankle that articulates with the tibia and fibula to form the ankle joint.

Tendon - Fibrous connective tissue that attaches muscles to bones.

Tibia - The inner of the two bones of the leg, it extends from the knee to the ankle and articulates with the femur and the talus.

Vascular – Pertaining to the blood vessels.

References


See the DISCLAIMER. All Humana member health plan contracts are NOT the same. All legislation/regulations on this subject may not be included. This document is for informational purposes only.