Heating Pads
Coding Guidelines, Documentation Requirements, and Medical Review

There are several HCPCS codes for heating pads and related accessories:

- E0210 – Electric heat pad, standard
- E0215 – Electric heat pad, moist
- E0217 – Water circulating heat pad with pump
- E0249 – Pad for water circulating heat unit

A standard electric heating pad (E0210) is a flexible device containing electric resistive elements producing heat. It has a fabric cover to prevent burns. It may or may not have timing devices for automatic shut-off. It may include heat-retaining material (e.g., gel, fluid, vegetable matter). If so, the heat retaining elements are contained in an enclosed pouch or bag in or around the heating portion. A heating pad that includes a cover or other element that utilizes water vapor (humidity) drawn from the air to create moisture when heated is billed using this code.

A moist electric heating pad (E0215) is a flexible device containing electric resistive elements producing heat. It has a fabric cover to prevent burns. It may or may not have timing devices for automatic shut-off. It must have a component that will absorb and retain liquid water. The water containing element must be protected from contact with the electrical components and the water must be in direct contact with the skin on application. A cover or other element that utilizes water vapor (humidity) drawn from the air to create moisture when heated does not meet the definition of this code. Water must be added to the device to meet the description of this code.

A water circulating heat pad with pump (E0217) consists of a flexible pad containing a series of channels through which water is circulated by means of an electrical pumping mechanism. The water is heated in an external reservoir. The pump, pad, and all accessories needed for the pad to be functional are included in the code. This system may contain alarms, temperature controls, sensors, and automatic shut-off mechanisms.

Code E0249 describes a durable replacement pad used with a water circulating heat pump system (E0217). It is made of rubber, heavy plastic, or durable fabric. It can be cleaned and is designed for long term use. A replacement pad made of other material that is designed for shorter term use must be billed using code A9999 (Miscellaneous DME supply or accessory, not otherwise specified).
Products that are appropriately coded using code E0217 are the T-Pump Heat Therapy System by Gaymar Industries, the VitalWrap Hot/Cold Contrast System by VitalWear Inc., and the HTP-1500 Heat Therapy System by Adroit Medical Systems Inc.

For questions concerning the coding of other products using any of these codes, please refer to the DMECS Product Classification Lists on the SADMERC web site or contact the SADMERC for items that are not listed.

When submitting claims for these items, suppliers must enter an ICD-9 diagnosis code that represents the condition for which the physician is ordering the device.

TrustSolutions, the Program Safeguard Contractor (PSC) for Region C, is conducting audits which include these codes, especially codes E0215 (moist electric heating pad) and E0217 (water circulating heat pad with pump). If suppliers receive a development letter as part of a pre-payment review of a claim or receive a document request letter as part of a post-payment audit, they must submit copies of the following:

- Valid detailed written order,
- Patient’s medical record containing information that supports the medical necessity of the item that is provided, and
- Delivery slip.

Refer to the recently released article titled “Documentation – Development Letters from TrustSolutions” for additional general information. This article can be found in the CMS Medicare Coverage Database, on the TrustSolutions, LLC web site, and in the “News and Publications” section of the Cigna Government Services web site.

Suppliers should be aware that the PSC has the authority to review and make medical necessity determinations (including least costly alternative determinations) on individual claims even in the absence of a Local Coverage Determination.

If suppliers have information from medical textbooks, published journal articles, or other sources which demonstrate the advantage of a moist electric heating pad (E0215) or a water circulating heating system (E0217) compared to a standard electric heating pad, it may be sent to:

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