

# MEDICAL POLICY

MEDICAL POLICY DETAILS	
Medical Policy Title	RADIOFREQUENCY TREATMENT FOR FECAL INCONTINENCE
Policy Number	7.01.66
Category	Technology Assessment
Effective Date	12/16/04
Revised Date	10/20/05, 10/19/06, 09/20/07, 08/21/08
Archived Date	07/16/09
Edited Date	07/15/10, 06/16/11, 06/21/12, 06/20/13, 06/19/14, 06/18/15, 06/16/16, 06/15/17, 10/18/18, 10/17/19
Product Disclaimer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a product excludes coverage for a service, it is not covered, and medical policy criteria do not apply.</li> <li>• If a commercial product (including an Essential Plan product) or a Medicaid product covers a specific service, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.</li> <li>• If a Medicare product covers a specific service, and there is no national or local Medicare coverage decision for the service, medical policy criteria apply to the benefit.</li> </ul>

## POLICY STATEMENT

Based upon our criteria and assessment of peer-reviewed literature, radiofrequency treatment of fecal incontinence has not been proven to be medically effective and is considered **investigational**.

*Refer to Corporate Medical Policy #11.01.03 regarding Experimental and Investigational Services.*

## POLICY GUIDELINES

The Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP/FEP) requires that procedures, devices or laboratory tests approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may not be considered investigational and thus these procedures, devices or laboratory tests may be assessed only on the basis of their medical necessity.

## DESCRIPTION

Fecal incontinence is defined as the involuntary leakage of stool from the rectum and anal canal. Fecal continence depends on a several mechanisms that include anal sphincter function, pelvic floor function, stool transit time, rectal capacity, and sensation. There are a variety of etiologies that can cause fecal incontinence, which include injury from vaginal delivery, anal surgery, and neurologic disease. Treatment depends on the cause and severity of incontinence. Less invasive treatment methods may include medication, dietary changes, biofeedback, and exercise programs to strengthen anal and pelvic muscles. Surgical interventions include sphincteroplasty and the placement of an artificial anal sphincter.

Radiofrequency energy has been investigated as a minimally invasive treatment for fecal incontinence in patients who have failed conservative therapies. The procedure is usually performed on an outpatient basis under conscious sedation/local anesthesia and entails delivery of radiofrequency energy to the sphincteric complex of the anal canal to create discrete thermal lesions. It is thought that over a period of several months, as these lesions heal and the tissue contracts, the tone of the tissue increases or tightens, thereby improving barrier function and continence.

## RATIONALE

The Secca™ System (Curon Medical, Inc.), which received FDA clearance through Investigational Device Exemption in March of 2002, consists of a hand-held anosopic device with electrodes and a radiofrequency generator. Per FDA label indications, the Secca™ System is intended for use specifically in the treatment of fecal incontinence in those patients with incontinence of stool (solid or liquid) at least once per week and who have failed conservative therapy.

Literature consists of small nonrandomized studies with outcomes of improved symptoms in fecal incontinence and quality of life. The clinical response rates using subjective measurements (greater than 10% improvement) were 60%-80%

*Proprietary Information of Univera Healthcare.*

## Medical Policy: RADIOFREQUENCY TREATMENT FOR FECAL INCONTINENCE

Policy Number: 7.01.66

Page: 2 of 3

in these studies. In contrast to these subjective findings, there were no differences in the objective measurements of the anal sphincter (e.g., manometry measures, rectal sensation volumes, pudendal nerve motor latency, or sphincter defects). While these findings are promising, the evidence remains inadequate to allow conclusions regarding long-term outcomes. The findings in these studies need to be validated by well-designed, randomized, controlled studies with a larger sample population and longer-term follow-up.

### **CODES**

- 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 Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
No specific codes	
46999	Unlisted procedure, anus

*Copyright © 2019 American Medical Association, Chicago, IL*

#### **HCPCS Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
No specific codes	

#### **ICD10 Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
R15.0-R15.9	Fecal incontinence (code range)

### **REFERENCES**

BlueCross BlueShield Association. Transanal radiofrequency treatment of fecal incontinence. Medical Policy Reference Manual Policy # 2.01.58. 2018 Nov 08.

\*Efron JE, et al. Safety and effectiveness of temperature-controlled radiofrequency energy delivery to the anal canal (Secca procedure) for the treatment of fecal incontinence. Dis Colon Rectum 2003 Dec; 46(12):1606-16.

Felt-Bersma RJ, et al. Temperature-controlled radiofrequency (SECCA) to the anal canal for the treatment of faecal incontinence offers moderate improvement. Eur J Gastroenterol Hepatol 2007 Jul;19(7):575-80.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Center for Devices and Radiological Health. 510(k) Summary Secca System. [[https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cdrh\\_docs/pdf/K014216.pdf](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cdrh_docs/pdf/K014216.pdf)] accessed 8/23/19.

Lefebure B, et al. Temperature-controlled radio frequency energy delivery (Secca procedure) for the treatment of fecal incontinence: results of a prospective study. In J Colorectal Dis 2008 Oct;23(10):993-7.

Kim DW, et al. Radiofrequency energy delivery to the anal canal: is it a promising new approach to the treatment of fecal incontinence? Am J Surg 2009 Jan;197(1):14-8.

Rao SS, et al. Diagnosis and management of fecal incontinence. American College of Gastroenterology Practice Parameters Committee. Am J Gastroenterol 2004 Aug;99(8):1585-604.

\*Takahashi T, et al. Extended two-year results of radiofrequency energy delivery for the treatment of fecal incontinence (Secca procedure). Dis Colon Rectum 2003 Jun;46(6):711-5.

**Medical Policy: RADIOFREQUENCY TREATMENT FOR FECAL INCONTINENCE**

**Policy Number: 7.01.66**

**Page: 3 of 3**

Takahashi-Monroy T, et al. SECCA procedure for the treatment of fecal incontinence: results of five-year follow-up. Dis Colon Rectum 2008 Mar;51(3):355-9.

Tjandra JJ, et al. Practice parameters for the treatment of fecal incontinence. Dis Colon Rectum 2007 Oct;50(10):1497-1507.

\*Key Article

**KEY WORDS**

Secca procedure

**CMS COVERAGE FOR MEDICARE PRODUCT MEMBERS**

Based on our review, radiofrequency ablation of fecal incontinence is not specifically addressed in National CMS or Regional Medicare coverage determinations or policies.