

02-10000-13

Original Effective Date: 07/15/02

Reviewed: 04/23/26

Revised: 05/15/26

Subject: Excimer Laser Therapy for Treatment of Dermatologic Conditions

THIS MEDICAL COVERAGE GUIDELINE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION, CERTIFICATION, EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS, OR A GUARANTEE OF PAYMENT, NOR DOES IT SUBSTITUTE FOR OR CONSTITUTE MEDICAL ADVICE. ALL MEDICAL DECISIONS ARE SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PATIENT AND PHYSICIAN. BENEFITS ARE DETERMINED BY THE GROUP CONTRACT, MEMBER BENEFIT BOOKLET, AND/OR INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIBER CERTIFICATE IN EFFECT AT THE TIME SERVICES WERE RENDERED. THIS MEDICAL COVERAGE GUIDELINE APPLIES TO ALL LINES OF BUSINESS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED IN THE PROGRAM EXCEPTIONS SECTION.

[Position Statement](#)

[Billing/Coding](#)

[Reimbursement](#)

[Program Exceptions](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Related Guidelines](#)

[Other](#)

[References](#)

[Updates](#)

DESCRIPTION:

Excimer lasers (also called exciplex lasers) are proposed for the treatment of a variety of dermatological conditions including psoriasis, vitiligo, and atopic dermatitis. The laser utilizes xenon chloride to emit a wavelength of 308 nanometers (nm) and targets specific lesions or affected areas, thus limiting exposure to the surrounding normal tissues. The laser allows higher dosages which could result in fewer treatments to produce clearing. The original indication of the excimer laser was for patients with mild-to-moderate psoriasis, defined as involvement of less than 10% of the skin. Newer excimer laser devices are faster and more powerful than the original models, which may allow treatment of patients with more extensive skin involvement (10%-20% body surface area).

Summary and Analysis of Evidence: The Joint American Academy of Dermatology- National Psoriasis Foundation guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis with phototherapy (Elmets, et al., 2019) recommends for maximal efficacy, treatment with targeted UVB phototherapy for adults with localized plaque psoriasis should be carried out 2 to 3 times per week rather than once every 1 to 2 weeks. The recommendations also include excimer laser is more efficacious than an excimer light for the treatment of localized plaque psoriasis in adults. Excimer laser therapy is an established treatment for psoriasis. The evidence for treatment of vitiligo with excimer laser includes systematic reviews of randomized controlled trials, individual trials and retrospective studies. There is published literature to support the use of excimer laser therapy to treat psoriasis and vitiligo for individuals that have failed to respond to consecutive treatment.

POSITION STATEMENT:

Use of an FDA-approved xenon chloride excimer laser (308 nm) **meets the definition of medical necessity** for the treatment of mild to moderate localized plaque psoriasis (comprising <20% body area) for members who have failed to respond to a consecutive 2 month trial of conservative treatment (i.e. topical agents, non-laser ultraviolet therapy).

Use of an FDA-approved excimer laser (308 nm) **meets the definition of medical necessity** for the treatment of moderate-to-severe localized plaque psoriasis.

NOTE: If the member fails to respond to an initial course of laser therapy for the treatment of localized plaque psoriasis additional therapy **does not meet the definition of medical necessity**.

Use of an FDA-approved excimer laser (308 nm) **meets the definition of medical necessity** for the treatment of vitiligo for members who have failed to respond to a consecutive 2 month trial of conservative treatment (i.e. topical agents, non-laser ultraviolet therapy).

NOTE: If the member fails to respond to an initial course of laser therapy for the treatment of vitiligo additional therapy **does not meet the definition of medical necessity**.

Use of excimer laser (308 nm) is considered **experimental or investigational** for all other indications including, but not limited to, the first line treatment of mild psoriasis, the treatment of generalized psoriasis, and the treatment of psoriatic arthritis. There is insufficient clinical evidence to permit conclusions on health outcomes.

BILLING/CODING INFORMATION:

CPT Coding:

96920	Excimer laser treatment for psoriasis; total area less than 250 sq cm
96921	Excimer laser treatment for psoriasis; 250 sq cm to 500 sq cm
96922	Excimer laser treatment for psoriasis; over 500 sq cm

ICD-10 Diagnosis Codes That Support Medical Necessity:

L40.0 – L40.4 L40.8, L40.9	Psoriasis
L80	Vitiligo

REIMBURSEMENT INFORMATION:

Total numbers of sessions per target area are limited to 30 in a 6-month period for codes 96920 – 96922 in any combination.

Services in excess of this limitation are subject to review of the following documentation to support medical necessity: attending physician initial assessment, attending physician history & physical, and attending physician visit notes that include documentation of failed response after 2 consecutive months of conservative therapy, member's response to laser therapy treatment including: reduction in Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score or other objective response measurement; significant follicular pigmentation, and documentation that treatment is affecting the underlying condition.

LOINC Codes:

DOCUMENTATION TABLE	LOINC CODES	LOINC TIME FRAME MODIFIER CODE	LOINC TIME FRAME MODIFIER CODES NARRATIVE
Physician Initial assessment	18736-9	18805-2	Include all data of the selected type that represents observations made six months or fewer before starting date of service for the claim.
Physician history and physical	28626-0	18805-2	Include all data of the selected type that represents observations made six months or fewer before starting date of service for the claim.
Attending physician visit note	18733-6	18805-2	Include all data of the selected type that represents observations made

			six months or fewer before starting date of service for the claim.
Clinical notes and chart sections (i.e., documentation that shows failed response after 2 consecutive months of conservative therapy; patient's response to laser therapy treatment)	18741-9	18805-2	Include all data of the selected type that represents observations made six months or fewer before starting date of service for the claim.

PROGRAM EXCEPTIONS:

Federal Employee Program (FEP): Follow FEP guidelines.

State Account Organization (SAO): Follow SAO guidelines.

Medicare Advantage products: The following National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) were reviewed on the last guideline reviewed date: Laser Procedures (140.5) and Treatment of Psoriasis (250.1) located at cms.gov.

If this Medical Coverage Guideline contains a step therapy requirement, in compliance with Florida law 627.42393, members or providers may request a step therapy protocol exemption to this requirement if based on medical necessity. The process for requesting a protocol exemption can be found at [Coverage Protocol Exemption Request](#).

DEFINITIONS:

No guideline specific definitions apply.

RELATED GUIDELINES:

[Psoralens Plus Ultraviolet A \(PUVA\) Therapy \(Photochemotherapy\), 02-10000-16](#)

OTHER:

None applicable.

REFERENCES:

1. Abrouk M, Levin E, et al. Excimer laser for the treatment of psoriasis: safety, efficacy, and patient acceptability. Psoriasis (Auckl). 2016 Dec 12;6:165-173.
2. Alyoussef A. Excimer Laser System: The Revolutionary Way to Treat Psoriasis. Cureus. 2023 Dec 9;15(12):e50249.
3. Ardeleanu V, Radaschin DS, et al. Excimer laser for psoriasis treatment: A case report and short review. Exp Ther Med. 2020 Jul;20(1):52-55. doi: 10.3892/etm.2020.8529.
4. Asawanonda P, Anderson RR et al. 2000. 308-nm Excimer Laser for the Treatment of Psoriasis. Archive of Dermatology 136:619-624.
5. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Evidence Positioning System®. 2.01.86 - Targeted Phototherapy and Psoralen with Ultraviolet A for Vitiligo; archived 02/25.
6. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Laser Procedures (140.5); accessed at cms.gov.

7. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Treatment of Psoriasis (250.1); accessed at [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov).
8. Elmetts CA, Lim HW, et al. Joint American Academy of Dermatology-National Psoriasis Foundation guidelines of care for the management and treatment of psoriasis with phototherapy. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. Sep2019; 81(3): 775-804.
9. Feldman SR. Treatment of psoriasis in adults. In: UpToDate, Dellavalle RP, Duffin KC, Ofori AO (Eds), UpToDate, Waltham, MA; accessed at [uptodate.com](https://www.uptodate.com) March 2024.
10. Feldman SR. Targeted phototherapy, 2025. In: UpToDate, Elmetts CA, Corona R (Eds), UpToDate, Waltham, MA; accessed at [uptodate.com](https://www.uptodate.com).
11. Fenniche S, Zaouak A, et al. Successful Treatment of Refractory Vitiligo with a Combination of Khellin and 308-nm Excimer Lamp: An Open-Label, 1-Year Prospective Study. *Dermatol Ther (Heidelb)*. 2018 Mar;8(1):127-135.
12. Gambichler T, Breuckmann F, Boms S, et al, Narrowband UVB Phototherapy in Skin Conditions Beyond Psoriasis, *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, Vol 52, Issue 4, pages 660-670, April 2005.
13. Gattu S, Pang ML, Pugashetti R, et al, Pilot Evaluation of Supra-Erythemogenic Phototherapy with Excimer Laser in the Treatment of Patients with Moderate to Severe Plaque Psoriasis, *Journal of Dermatology Treatment*, 2009 January.
14. He M, Bao N, et al. A randomized, prospective pilot study for comparison of a triple combination of 2940 nm Er:YAG Laser and triamcinolone acetonide solution with either 308 nm excimer laser or 0.1% tacrolimus in treatment of stable segmental vitiligo. *Dermatol Ther*. 2022 Nov;35(11):e15875. PMID:36181292.
15. Hofer A, Hassan AS, Legat FJ, et al, Optimal Weekly Frequency of 308-nm Excimer Laser Treatment in Vitiligo Patients, *British Journal of Dermatology*, Vol 152, Issue 5, April 2005.
16. Khosravi H, Siegel MP, Van Voorhees AS, et al. Treatment of inverse/intertriginous psoriasis: updated guidelines from the Medical Board of the National Psoriasis Foundation. *J Drugs Dermatol*. Aug 01 2017;16(8):760-766. PMID 28809991.
17. Menter A, Korman NJ, Elmetts CA, et al, Guidelines of Care for the Management of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis, Section 5- Guidelines of Care for the Treatment of Psoriasis with Phototherapy and Photochemotherapy; *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 2010 Jan;62(1):114-35.
18. Mohammadi S, Amiri R, et al. Treatment protocols and efficacy of combined laser with medical treatment modalities in vitiligo. *J Cosmet Dermatol*. 2022 Aug;21(8):3272-3291. PMID:34766697.
19. Pahlajani, N., Katz, B. J., Lozano, A. M., Murphy, F. & Gottlieb, A. (2005). Comparison of the efficacy and safety of the 308 nm excimer laser for the treatment of localized psoriasis in adults and in children: a pilot study. *Pediatric Dermatology*, 22(2), 161-165.
20. Post NF, Ezekwe N, et al. The use of lasers in vitiligo, an overview. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol*. 2022 Jun;36(6):779-789.
21. Prussick R, Wu JJ, Armstrong AW, et al. Psoriasis in solid organ transplant patients: best practice recommendations from The Medical Board of the National Psoriasis Foundation. *J Dermatolog Treat*. Oct 24 2017:1-5.
22. Psoriasis Area Severity Index (PASI) Calculator (1.7.3); accessed March 2024 at pasi.corti.li.
23. Suo DF, Zeng SW, Meng LH. 308 nm excimer laser and tacrolimus ointment in the treatment of facial vitiligo: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lasers Med Sci*. 2024 Mar 8;39(1):90. PMID: 38456924.
24. Taieb A, Picardo M, Vitiligo, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Volume 360: 160-169, 01/08/09.

25. Thibodeaux Q, Beck K, et al. Treatment of Plaque Psoriasis With an Excimer Laser Utilizing an Optimal Therapeutic UVB Dose Protocol. J Drugs Dermatol. 2020 Apr 1;19(4):49-354. PMID: 32272510.
26. Tsao H, Alexis AF. Vitiligo: Management and prognosis, 2025. In UpToDate, Callen JP, Corona R (Eds), UpToDate, Waltham, MA; accessed at uptodate.com.
27. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA); accessed at fda.gov.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

This Medical Coverage Guideline (MCG) was approved by the Florida Blue Medical Policy and Coverage Committee on 04/23/26.

GUIDELINE UPDATE INFORMATION:

07/15/02	New Medical Coverage Guideline.
01/01/03	Annual HCPCS coding update.
07/15/03	Annual review. Added program exception for Medicare & More. Updated references.
07/15/04	Unscheduled review and revision; consisting of updated references and added investigational statement for excimer laser in the treatment of vitiligo.
05/15/05	Scheduled review and revision of guideline; consisting of updated references.
06/15/06	Scheduled annual review; eligible for coverage of psoriasis.
06/15/07	Annual review, maintained coverage and limitation language; reformatted guideline; references updated.
05/15/10	Guideline returned to active status; description section, position statements, reimbursement information section and references updated.
10/15/10	Revision; related ICD-10 codes added.
03/15/11	Annual review; position statements maintained and references updated.
07/01/11	Revision; formatting changes.
05/11/14	Revision: Program Exceptions section updated.
10/01/15	Revision; ICD10 coding section updated.
11/01/15	Revision: ICD-9 Codes deleted.
04/15/19	Review; Position statements, description, and references updated.
04/15/21	Review; Policy title, description, position statements, and references updated.
05/15/23	Review: Position statements maintained; references updated.
05/23/23	Update to Program Exceptions section.
01/01/24	Annual CPT/HCPCS coding update. Codes 96920-96922 revised.
05/15/24	Review: Position statements maintained; description and references updated.
05/15/25	Review: Position statements maintained and references updated.
05/15/26	Annual review: Position statements maintained; references updated.