Nutrient/Nutritional Panel Testing

Multimarker nutritional panel testing is proposed for patients with certain chronic conditions (e.g., mood disorders, fibromyalgia, unexplained fatigue) as well as for healthy individuals seeking to optimize health and/or fitness.

Nutritional panel testing aims to identify nutritional deficiencies that will lead to personalized nutritional supplement recommendations. Testing is proposed both for otherwise healthy individuals to optimize health and for patients with chronic conditions such as mood disorders, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue to specify supplements that will ameliorate symptoms.

Genova Diagnostics offers nutritional/nutrient panel testing. Among tests offered by this company is the NutriEval® FMV test, which involves analysis of urine and blood samples and provides information on more than 100 markers including organic acids, amino acids, fatty acids, markers of oxidative stress (direct measurement of glutathione and CoQ10, and markers of oxidative injury and DNA damage) and nutrient elements (see Table 1).

The company produces a report that includes test results divided into the categories normal, borderline and high need, along with recommendations for supplements and dosages for items categorized as high need. NutriEval® FMV patient reports can recommend supplementation or any of the following nutrients, if they are found to be areas of high need.

A related test, the ONE (Optimal Nutritional Evaluation) FMV also by Genova Diagnostics, limits testing to the organic acid, amino acid, and oxidative stress marker categories.

SpectraCell Laboratories offers a micronutrient test that measures functional deficiencies at the cellular level. The test assesses how well the body uses 33 vitamins, minerals, amino and fatty acids, antioxidants, and metabolites (see Table 1). SpectraCell categorizes test results into adequate, borderline, and deficient, and offers supplementation suggestions based on each patient’s deficiencies.

Table 1. Components of the NutriEval FMV Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>NutriEval</th>
<th>SpectraCell Nutrient Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B vitamins</td>
<td>Thiamin B1, riboflavin B2, niacin B3, pyridoxine B6, biotin B7, folic acid B9, cobalamin B12</td>
<td>Vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B3, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, biotin, folate, pantothenate, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals</td>
<td>Magnesium, manganese, molybdenum, zinc</td>
<td>Calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, copper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fatty acids</th>
<th>Omega-3-oils</th>
<th>Oleic acid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digestive</td>
<td>Probiotics, pancreatic enzymes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vitamins</td>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amino acids</td>
<td>Arginine, asparagines, cysteine,</td>
<td>Asparagine, glutamine, serine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>glutamine, glycine, histidine,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>isoleucine, leucine, lycine, methionine,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>phenylalanine, serine, taurine,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>threonine, tryptophan, tyrosine, valine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***Note: This Medical Policy is complex and technical. For questions concerning the technical language and/or specific clinical indications for its use, please consult your physician.***

Policy

Nutrient/Nutritional panel Testing is considered investigational for all applications. BCBSNC does not provide coverage for investigational services or procedures.

Benefits Application

This medical policy relates only to the services or supplies described herein. Please refer to the Member's Benefit Booklet for availability of benefits. Member's benefits may vary according to benefit design; therefore member benefit language should be reviewed before applying the terms of this medical policy.

When Nutrient/Nutritional Panel Testing is covered

Not applicable.

When Nutrient/Nutritional Panel Testing is not covered

Nutrient/nutritional panel testing is considered **investigational** for all indications including but not limited to testing for nutritional deficiencies in patients with mood disorders, fibromyalgia, unexplained fatigue and healthy individuals.

Policy Guidelines

There is no evidence on any indication to suggest that nutritional panel testing improves the net health outcome compared with testing for one or several individual nutrients. This includes patients with mood disorders, fibromyalgia, and/or unexplained fatigue, as well as healthy individuals seeking to optimize health and/or fitness. Moreover, with nutritional panel testing, there is a potential for incidental findings that could cause harm. Examples of potential harms include unnecessary confirmatory tests, unnecessary treatments provided for clinically insignificant conditions, and toxicity related to supplementation, or interactions between nutritional supplements and prescription medication.

For individuals who have mood disorders, fibromyalgia, or unexplained fatigue, or healthy individuals who seek to optimize health and fitness who receive nutritional panel testing, the evidence includes several systematic reviews on the association between a single condition and a single nutrient and on the treatment of specific conditions with nutritional supplements. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, change in disease status, and functional outcomes. There was no evidence of associations between fibromyalgia or unexplained fatigue and nutrient deficiencies. Systematic reviews have found statistically significant associations between depression and levels of several nutrients; however, there
Nutrient/Nutritional Panel Testing

is no evidence that nutrient supplementation for patients with depression improves health outcomes. Also, there is no direct evidence on the health benefits of nutritional panel testing for any condition, including testing healthy individuals, and no evidence that nutritional panel testing is superior to testing for individual nutrients for any condition. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

Billing/Coding/Physician Documentation Information

This policy may apply to the following codes. Inclusion of a code in this section does not guarantee that it will be reimbursed. For further information on reimbursement guidelines, please see Administrative Policies on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina web site at www.bcbsnc.com. They are listed in the Category Search on the Medical Policy search page.

Applicable service codes: There are no specific codes for these panels of tests.

Tests in the panel that have specific CPT codes would be reported using those codes such as folic acid (82746), magnesium (83735), manganese (83785), vitamin A (84590), zinc (84630). There are codes for testing multiple amino acids – 82128 for qualitative testing and 82136 for quantitative testing. The unlisted chemistry code 84999 would be used once for the other tests in the panel that do not have specific codes (or are used incorrectly with multiple units).

BCBSNC may request medical records for determination of medical necessity. When medical records are requested, letters of support and/or explanation are often useful, but are not sufficient documentation unless all specific information needed to make a medical necessity determination is included.

Scientific Background and Reference Sources


Medical Director Review 8/2015


Policy Implementation/Update Information

10/1/15 New policy issued. Nutrient/Nutritional panel testing is considered investigational for all indications including but not limited to testing for nutritional deficiencies in patients with mood disorders, fibromyalgia, unexplained fatigue and healthy individuals. Medical director review 8/2015. Notification given 10/1/15 for effective date 12/30/15. (lpr)

4/1/16 Specialty Matched Consultant Advisory Panel review 2/24/2016. No change to policy. (an)

3/31/17 Specialty Matched Consultant Advisory Panel review 2/22/2017. No change to policy. (an)


Medical policy is not an authorization, certification, explanation of benefits or a contract. Benefits and eligibility are determined before medical guidelines and payment guidelines are applied. Benefits are determined by the group contract and subscriber certificate that is in effect at the time services are rendered. This document is solely provided for informational purposes only and is based on research of current medical literature and review of common medical practices in the treatment
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and diagnosis of disease. Medical practices and knowledge are constantly changing and BCBSNC reserves the right to review and revise its medical policies periodically.