Cigna Medical Coverage Policy

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Subject: Ambulatory Assistance Devices

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
The following Coverage Policy applies to health benefit plans administered by Cigna companies. Coverage Policies are intended to provide guidance in interpreting certain standard Cigna benefit plans. Please note, the terms of a customer’s particular benefit plan document [Group Service Agreement, Evidence of Coverage, Certificate of Coverage, Summary Plan Description (SPD) or similar plan document] may differ significantly from the standard benefit plans upon which these Coverage Policies are based. For example, a customer’s benefit plan document may contain a specific exclusion related to a topic addressed in a Coverage Policy. In the event of a conflict, a customer’s benefit plan document always supersedes the information in the Coverage Policies. In the absence of a controlling federal or state coverage mandate, benefits are ultimately determined by the terms of the applicable benefit plan document. Coverage determinations in each specific instance require consideration of 1) the terms of the applicable benefit plan document in effect on the date of service; 2) any applicable laws/regulations; 3) any relevant collateral source materials including Coverage Policies and; 4) the specific facts of the particular situation. Coverage Policies relate exclusively to the administration of health benefit plans. Coverage Policies are not recommendations for treatment and should never be used as treatment guidelines. In certain markets, delegated vendor guidelines may be used to support medical necessity and other coverage determinations. Proprietary information of Cigna. Copyright ©2017 Cigna

Coverage Policy

Coverage for ambulatory assistance devices is subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable benefit plan’s Durable Medical Equipment (DME) benefit and schedule of copayments. In addition, ambulatory assistance devices are specifically excluded under some benefit plans. Please refer to the applicable benefit plan document to determine benefit availability and the terms, conditions and limitations of coverage. Under many benefit plans, coverage for DME is limited to the lowest-cost alternative.

If coverage for ambulatory assistance devices is available, the following conditions of coverage apply.

Cigna covers the following ambulatory assistance devices as medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

- A standard cane (HCPCS codes E0100, E0105) and crutches (HCPCS codes E0110–E0116) are covered when prescribed for an individual who is normally ambulatory but suffers from a condition that impairs ambulation.

- A standard walker (HCPCS codes E0130, E0135, E0141, E0143) and related medically necessary accessories are covered when ALL of the following criteria are met:
  - The individual has a mobility limitation that significantly impairs his/her ability to participate in mobility-related activities of daily living that cannot be adequately or safely addressed by a cane.
  - The individual is able to safely use the walker.
  - The functional mobility deficit can be sufficiently resolved with use of a walker.
A heavy-duty walker (HCPCS codes E0148, E0149) is covered for an individual who meets the criteria for a standard walker and weighs more than 300 pounds.

A heavy-duty, multiple-braking system, variable-resistance walker (HCPCS code E0147) is covered for an individual who meets coverage criteria for a standard walker but who is unable to use a standard walker due to a disorder or condition causing the restricted use of one hand. Obesity by itself is not a medically necessary reason for a heavy-duty, multiple-braking system, variable-resistance walker.

A walker with trunk support (HCPCS code E0140) (e.g., Rifton Gait Pacer, Mulholland Walkabout, KidWalk Gait Mobility System) is covered for an individual who meets coverage criteria for a standard walker and requires moderate to maximum support for walking and has demonstrated the capability of walking with the use of the device.

A knee crutch/hands-free walker (e.g., Roll-A-Bout walker, Rolleraid™, iWALKFree™, Turning Leg Caddy®) (HCPCS code E0118) for below-the-knee injuries or surgery is covered when the individual’s condition is such that he/she is unable to use crutches, standard walkers or other standard ambulatory assist devices.

Cigna covers the following ambulatory assist device accessories as medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

- leg extensions for walkers for individuals who are six feet tall or more
- arm-rest attachments when the individual’s ability to grip is impaired

In general, Cigna considers duplicate equipment a convenience item and not medically necessary and thus not covered. Cigna covers replacement of a medically necessary ambulatory assist device or accessory only when there is anatomical change or when reasonable wear and tear renders the item nonfunctioning and not repairable.

Cigna does not cover ANY of the following because each is considered one or more of the following: not primarily medical in nature, a self-help or convenience item and/or not medically necessary (this list may not be all-inclusive):

- articulated, spring assisted crutch (HCPCS code E0117)
- walker with an enclosed frame, wheeled with posterior seat (HCPCS code E0144)
- enhanced walker accessories, such as color or style
- hand-operated brakes other than HCPCS code E0147
- baskets, trays, cup holders or other convenience items
- seat attachments (HCPCS code E0156)
- standard strollers (refer to the Cigna Coverage Policy on Wheelchairs/Power Operated Vehicles)
- walking belts
- tricycles

**General Background**

In May 2005, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) determined that mobility assistive equipment was reasonable and necessary for patients who have a personal mobility deficit sufficient to impair their participation in mobility-related activities of daily living (e.g., toileting, feeding, dressing, grooming, and bathing) in customary locations in the home. CMS has modified coverage indications for canes, crutches, quad canes, and walkers. CMS reported that the best available evidence was found largely in the experience of impartial practitioners (CMS, 2005). Because the published literature does not provide detailed guidance regarding which specific item of mobility assistive equipment is appropriate for a patient with a specific limitation to participate in a specific mobility-related activity, this policy will draw from the definitions and clinical criteria determined by CMS.
Canes and Crutches
Canes (HCPCS codes E0100, E0105) and crutches (HCPCS codes E0110–E0116) are considered necessary when the patient has a mobility limitation that significantly impairs his/her ability to participate in one or more mobility-related activities of daily living in the home, the patient is able to safely use the cane or crutch; and the functional mobility deficit can be sufficiently resolved by use of a cane or crutch. A mobility limitation is any limitation that:

- prevents the patient from accomplishing the mobility-related activities of daily living entirely
- places the patient at reasonably determined heightened risk of morbidity or mortality secondary to the attempts to perform mobility-related activities of daily living
- prevents the patient from completing the mobility-related activities of daily living within a reasonable time frame (CMS, 2005).

Canes (HCPCS codes E0100, E0105): A cane is a device intended for medical purposes that is used to provide minimal weight support while walking. Examples of canes include:

- standard
- forearm
- tripod
- quad or retractable stud on the ground end

Crutches (HCPCS codes E0110–E0116): A crutch is a device as intended for medical purposes to be used by disabled persons to provide minimal to moderate weight support while walking. There are three basic types of crutches:

- Axillary (underarm) is the most common type of crutch. Wooden or aluminum models can be adjusted easily to overall height and hand height with the elbow about 30°.
- Forearm crutch should allow flexion of the elbow at 15–30°. The increased flexion allows the arm to bear greater weight. The cuff on the crutch should sit below the back of the elbow.
- Platform or triceps crutch should contact the skin fold of the armpit. The lower cuff should lie below the back of the elbow to avoid bony contact on the arm, yet provide stability.

Articulating, Spring Assisted Crutch (HCPCS code E0117): The medical necessity for an underarm, articulating, spring assisted crutch has not been established (CMS, 2005).

Walkers
A standard walker and related accessories are covered when the following criteria are met: the patient has a mobility limitation that significantly impairs his/her ability to participate in one or more mobility-related activities of daily living in the home, the patient is able to safely use the walker; and the functional mobility deficit can be sufficiently resolved with use of a walker. A mobility limitation is ANY one that:

- prevents the patient from accomplishing the mobility-related activities of daily living entirely
- places the patient at reasonably determined heightened risk of morbidity or mortality secondary to the attempts to perform the mobility-related activities of daily living
- prevents the patient from completing the mobility-related activities of daily living within a reasonable time frame (CMS, 2005).

Standard Walker (HCPCS codes E0130, E0135, E0141, E0143): A standard walker can have two, three or four wheels that are fixed or swivel. It may be of fixed height or adjustable height and may or may not include glide-type brakes (or equivalent). A glide-type brake consists of a spring mechanism (or equivalent) that raises the leg post of the walker off the ground when the patient is not pushing down on the frame (CMS, 2005).

Heavy-Duty Walker (HCPCS codes E0148, E0149): A heavy-duty walker is capable of supporting patients who weigh more than 300 pounds. A heavy-duty walker may include wheels and glide-type brakes. A wheeled walker can have two, three or four wheels that may be fixed or have the ability to swivel. A glide-type brake consists of a spring mechanism (or equivalent) which raises the leg post of the walker off the ground when the
individual is not pushing down on the frame. The walker height can be fixed or adjustable, and the walker may be rigid or folding (CMS, 2005).

Enclosed Walker (HCPCS code E0144): An enclosed frame walker is a folding, wheeled walker that has a frame that completely surrounds the patient and an attached seat in the back. Walkers with enclosed frames are not considered medically necessary (CMS, 2005).

Heavy-Duty Multiple Breaking System Variable Wheel Resistance Walker (HCPCS code E0147): This is a four-wheeled, adjustable-height, folding walker that has all of the following characteristics:

- It is capable of supporting a patient who weighs > 350 pounds.
- It has hand-operated brakes that cause the wheels to lock when the hand levers are released.
- The hand brakes can be set so that either or both can lock both wheels.
- The pressure required to operate each hand brake is individually adjustable.
- There is an additional braking mechanism on the front crossbar.
- At least two wheels have brakes that can be independently set through adjustability to give varying resistance.

A heavy-duty, multiple-braking system, variable-resistance walker is covered for patients who meet coverage criteria for a standard walker and who are unable to use a standard walker due to a severe neuralgic disorder or other condition causing the restricted use of one hand. Obesity by itself is not a medically necessary reason for an HCPCS code E0147 walker (CMS, 2005).

Walker with Trunk Support (HCPCS code E0140): A walker with trunk support (e.g. Rifton gait trainer/pacer, DBA Rifton Equipment, Chester, NY; The Walkabout™, Mulholland Positioning Systems Inc., Santa Paula, CA; KidWalk Gait Mobility System, Prime Engineering, Fresno, CA; Nimbo Posterior Walker, Drive DeVilbiss Healthcare, Port Washington, NY) provides balance and postural control for children or adults who cannot ambulate safely with a traditional walker. A walker with trunk support would be considered medically necessary for patients who require moderate to maximum support for walking and who are capable of walking with the device.

Knee Crutch/Hands-Free Walker (HCPCS code E0118): A knee crutch/hands-free walker (e.g., Roll-A-Bout-walker, Roll-A-Bout Corporation, Frederica, DE; Rolleraid™ Enhanced Mobility Systems, Inc., Spokane, WA; iWalkFree™, Canadaleg Inc., Mansfield, Ontario, Canada; Turning Leg Caddy®, RAMMTLC LLC, Lynnwood, WA) is a device designed for a below-the-knee injury. The platform for the injured leg features cushions to support the knee and ankle. The wheel of the device is offset in the direction of the injury to provide stability and mobility. A knee crutch/hands-free walker would be considered medically necessary when the patient is not able for clinical reasons to use crutches, standard walkers or other standard ambulatory assist devices.

Standard Strollers: Standard strollers are not considered medical in nature. Specially adapted strollers may be considered medically necessary when used in place of a wheelchair. (Refer to the Cigna HealthCare Coverage Policy Wheelchairs/Power Operated Vehicles).

Tricycle: A tricycle (e.g., Rifton Ranger tricycle, DBA Rifton Equipment, Chester, NY) is not considered a primarily medical device and is not an ambulatory assistance alternative to a standard walker, gait trainer, or wheelchair.

Accessories
Tips and Pads: Cane, crutch and walker tips and pads are rubber (or rubber substitute) device accessories that are applied to the ground end of mobility aids to prevent skidding or that are applied to the body contact area of the device for comfort, or as an aid in using an ambulatory assist device. These types of tips and pads are considered medically necessary when intended for medical purposes.

Leg Extensions: Leg extensions may be considered medically necessary for patients who are six feet tall or more.
**Arm Rests:** Arm rest attachments may be considered medically necessary when the patient’s ability to grip is impaired.

**Enhanced Accessory:** An enhanced accessory is one that does not contribute significantly to the therapeutic function of the walker and would not be considered medically necessary. It may include, but is not limited to, style, color, hand-operated brakes (other than those described in HCPCS code E0147), seat attachments (HCPCS code E0156), basket or other equipment (CMS, 2005). Walking belts are not considered primarily medical in nature.

**Use Outside of the US**
No relevant information found.

**Summary**
Mobility assistive equipment is considered medically necessary for patients who have a personal mobility limitation sufficient to impair their participation in mobility-related activities of daily living (e.g., toileting, feeding, and dressing, grooming, and bathing) in customary locations in the home. A mobility limitation is any one that:

- prevents the patient from accomplishing the mobility-related activities of daily living entirely
- places the patient at reasonably determined heightened risk of morbidity or mortality secondary to the attempts to perform the mobility-related activities of daily living
- prevents the patient from completing the mobility-related activities of daily living within a reasonable time frame

Canes and crutches are considered medically necessary when prescribed by a physician for a patient with a condition that is causing impaired ambulation, and when there is a potential for ambulation. Standard walkers, heavy-duty walkers (with or without multiple-braking systems or variable resistance), walkers with trunk support, and knee crutch/hands-free walkers are all considered medically necessary when criteria specific to that device are met.

Walkers with enclosed frames, articulating, spring assisted crutches and enhanced accessories that do not contribute significantly to the therapeutic function of the device are not considered medically necessary.

Standard strollers, tricycles or walking belts are not considered medical in nature.

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**Coding/Billing Information**

**Note:**
1) This list of codes may not be all-inclusive.
2) Deleted codes and codes which are not effective at the time the service is rendered may not be eligible for reimbursement

**Covered when medically necessary:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A4635</td>
<td>Underarm pad, crutch, replacement, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4636</td>
<td>Replacement, handgrip, cane, crutch, or walker, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4637</td>
<td>Replacement, tip, cane, crutch, walker, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0100</td>
<td>Cane, includes canes of all materials, adjustable or fixed, with tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0105</td>
<td>Cane, quad or three prong, includes canes of all materials, adjustable or fixed, with tips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0110</td>
<td>Crutches, forearm, includes crutches of various materials, adjustable or fixed, pair, complete with tips and handgrips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0111</td>
<td>Crutch forearm, includes crutches of various materials, adjustable or fixed, each, with tip and handgrips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0112</td>
<td>Crutches underarm, wood, adjustable or fixed, pair, with pads, tips and handgrips</td>
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<td>HCPCS Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0113</td>
<td>Crutch underarm, wood, adjustable or fixed, each with pad, tip, and handgrip</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0114</td>
<td>Crutches underarm, other than wood, adjustable or fixed, pair, with pads, tips and handgrips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0116</td>
<td>Crutch, underarm, other than wood, adjustable or fixed, with pad, tip, handgrip, with or without shock absorber, each</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0118</td>
<td>Crutch substitute, lower leg platform, with or without wheels, each</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0130</td>
<td>Walker, rigid (pickup), adjustable or fixed height</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0135</td>
<td>Walker, folding (pickup), adjustable or fixed height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0140</td>
<td>Walker, with trunk support, adjustable or fixed height, any type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0141</td>
<td>Walker, rigid, wheeled, adjustable or fixed height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0143</td>
<td>Walker, folding, wheeled, adjustable or fixed height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0147</td>
<td>Walker, heavy duty, multiple braking system, variable wheel resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0148</td>
<td>Walker, heavy duty, without wheels, rigid or folding, any type, each</td>
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<td>E0149</td>
<td>Walker, heavy duty, wheeled, rigid or folding, any type</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0153</td>
<td>Platform attachment, forearm crutch, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0154</td>
<td>Platform attachment, walker, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0155</td>
<td>Wheel attachment, rigid pick-up walker, per pair</td>
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<tr>
<td>E0157</td>
<td>Crutch attachment, walker, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0158</td>
<td>Leg extensions for a walker, per set of four (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0159</td>
<td>Brake attachment for wheeled walker, replacement, each</td>
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**Convenience/Not Medically Necessary/Not Covered:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCPCS Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E0117</td>
<td>Crutch, underarm, articulating, spring assisted, each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0144</td>
<td>Walker, enclosed, four sided frame, rigid or folding, wheeled with posterior seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E0156</td>
<td>Seat attachment, walker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**References**


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