

CLINICAL APPROPRIATENESS GUIDELINES

CARDIOLOGY

Appropriate Use Criteria: Percutaneous Coronary Intervention

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Description and Application of the Guidelines

The AIM Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines (hereinafter “the AIM Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines” or the “Guidelines”) are designed to assist providers in making the most appropriate treatment decision for a specific clinical condition for an individual. As used by AIM, the Guidelines establish objective and evidence-based criteria for medical necessity determinations where possible. In the process, multiple functions are accomplished:

- To establish criteria for when services are medically necessary
- To assist the practitioner as an educational tool
- To encourage standardization of medical practice patterns
- To curtail the performance of inappropriate and/or duplicate services
- To advocate for patient safety concerns
- To enhance the quality of health care
- To promote the most efficient and cost-effective use of services

The AIM guideline development process complies with applicable accreditation standards, including the requirement that the Guidelines be developed with involvement from appropriate providers with current clinical expertise relevant to the Guidelines under review and be based on the most up-to-date clinical principles and best practices. Relevant citations are included in the References section attached to each Guideline. AIM reviews all of its Guidelines at least annually.

AIM makes its Guidelines publicly available on its website twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Copies of the AIM Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines are also available upon oral or written request. Although the Guidelines are publicly-available, AIM considers the Guidelines to be important, proprietary information of AIM, which cannot be sold, assigned, leased, licensed, reproduced or distributed without the written consent of AIM.

AIM applies objective and evidence-based criteria, and takes individual circumstances and the local delivery system into account when determining the medical appropriateness of health care services. The AIM Guidelines are just guidelines for the provision of specialty health services. These criteria are designed to guide both providers and reviewers to the most appropriate services based on a patient's unique circumstances. In all cases, clinical judgment consistent with the standards of good medical practice should be used when applying the Guidelines. Guideline determinations are made based on the information provided at the time of the request. It is expected that medical necessity decisions may change as new information is provided or based on unique aspects of the patient's condition. The treating clinician has final authority and responsibility for treatment decisions regarding the care of the patient and for justifying and demonstrating the existence of medical necessity for the requested service. The Guidelines are not a substitute for the experience and judgment of a physician or other health care professionals. Any clinician seeking to apply or consult the Guidelines is expected to use independent medical judgment in the context of individual clinical circumstances to determine any patient's care or treatment.

The Guidelines do not address coverage, benefit or other plan specific issues. Applicable federal and state coverage mandates take precedence over these clinical guidelines. If requested by a health plan, AIM will review requests based on health plan medical policy/guidelines in lieu of the AIM Guidelines.

The Guidelines may also be used by the health plan or by AIM for purposes of provider education, or to review the medical necessity of services by any provider who has been notified of the need for medical necessity review, due to billing practices or claims that are not consistent with other providers in terms of frequency or some other manner.

General Clinical Guideline

Clinical Appropriateness Framework

Critical to any finding of clinical appropriateness under the guidelines for a specific diagnostic or therapeutic intervention are the following elements:

- Prior to any intervention, it is essential that the clinician confirm the diagnosis or establish its pretest likelihood based on a complete evaluation of the patient. This includes a history and physical examination and, where applicable, a review of relevant laboratory studies, diagnostic testing, and response to prior therapeutic intervention.
- The anticipated benefit of the recommended intervention should outweigh any potential harms that may result (net benefit).
- Current literature and/or standards of medical practice should support that the recommended intervention offers the greatest net benefit among competing alternatives.
- Based on the clinical evaluation, current literature, and standards of medical practice, there exists a reasonable likelihood that the intervention will change management and/or lead to an improved outcome for the patient.

If these elements are not established with respect to a given request, the determination of appropriateness will most likely require a peer-to-peer conversation to understand the individual and unique facts that would supersede the requirements set forth above. During the peer-to-peer conversation, factors such as patient acuity and setting of service may also be taken into account.

Simultaneous Ordering of Multiple Diagnostic or Therapeutic Interventions

Requests for multiple diagnostic or therapeutic interventions at the same time will often require a peer-to-peer conversation to understand the individual circumstances that support the medical necessity of performing all interventions simultaneously. This is based on the fact that appropriateness of additional intervention is often dependent on the outcome of the initial intervention.

Additionally, either of the following may apply:

- Current literature and/or standards of medical practice support that one of the requested diagnostic or therapeutic interventions is more appropriate in the clinical situation presented; or
- One of the diagnostic or therapeutic interventions requested is more likely to improve patient outcomes based on current literature and/or standards of medical practice.

Repeat Diagnostic Intervention

In general, repeated testing of the same anatomic location for the same indication should be limited to evaluation following an intervention, or when there is a change in clinical status such that additional testing is required to determine next steps in management. At times, it may be necessary to repeat a test using different techniques or protocols to clarify a finding or result of the original study.

Repeated testing for the same indication using the same or similar technology may be subject to additional review or require peer-to-peer conversation in the following scenarios:

- Repeated diagnostic testing at the same facility due to technical issues
- Repeated diagnostic testing requested at a different facility due to provider preference or quality concerns
- Repeated diagnostic testing of the same anatomic area based on persistent symptoms with no clinical change, treatment, or intervention since the previous study
- Repeated diagnostic testing of the same anatomic area by different providers for the same member over a short period of time

Repeat Therapeutic Intervention

In general, repeated therapeutic intervention in the same anatomic area is considered appropriate when the prior intervention proved effective or beneficial and the expected duration of relief has lapsed. A repeat intervention requested prior to the expected duration of relief is not appropriate unless it can be confirmed that the prior intervention was never administered.

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Percutaneous Coronary Intervention

Codes

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The following code list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Authorization requirements will vary by health plan. Please consult the applicable health plan for guidance on specific procedure codes.

Specific CPT codes for services should be used when available. Nonspecific or not otherwise classified codes may be subject to additional documentation requirements and review.

CPT/HCPCS

- 92920Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty; single major coronary artery or branch
- 92921Percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92924Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with coronary angioplasty when performed; single major coronary artery or branch
- 92925Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with coronary angioplasty when performed; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92928Percutaneous transcatheter placement of intracoronary stent(s), with coronary angioplasty when performed; single major coronary artery or branch
- 92929Percutaneous transcatheter placement of intracoronary stent(s), with coronary angioplasty when performed; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92933Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with intracoronary stent, with coronary angioplasty when performed; single major coronary artery or branch
- 92934Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with intracoronary stent, with coronary angioplasty when performed; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92937Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of or through coronary artery bypass graft (internal mammary, free arterial, venous), any combination of intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty, including distal protection when performed; single vessel
- 92938Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of or through coronary artery bypass graft (internal mammary, free arterial, venous), any combination of intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty, including distal protection when performed; each additional branch subtended by the bypass graft (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92943Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of chronic total occlusion, coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or coronary artery bypass graft, any combination of intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty; single vessel
- 92944Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of chronic total occlusion, coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or coronary artery bypass graft, any combination of intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty; each additional coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or bypass graft (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- C9600.....Percutaneous transcatheter placement of drug eluting intracoronary stent(s), with coronary angioplasty when performed; single major coronary artery or branch
- C9601.....Percutaneous transcatheter placement of drug-eluting intracoronary stent(s), with coronary angioplasty when performed; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (list separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- C9602.....Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with drug eluting intracoronary stent, with coronary angioplasty when performed; single major coronary artery or branch
- C9603.....Percutaneous transluminal coronary atherectomy, with drug-eluting intracoronary stent, with coronary angioplasty when performed; each additional branch of a major coronary artery (list separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- C9604.....Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of or through coronary artery bypass graft (internal mammary, free arterial, venous), any combination of drug-eluting intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty, including distal protection when performed; single vessel
- C9605.....Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of or through coronary artery bypass graft (internal mammary, free arterial, venous), any combination of drug-eluting intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty, including distal protection when performed; each additional branch subtended by the bypass graft (list separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

- C9607.....Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of chronic total occlusion, coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or coronary artery bypass graft, any combination of drug-eluting intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty; single vessel
- C9608.....Percutaneous transluminal revascularization of chronic total occlusion, coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or coronary artery bypass graft, any combination of drug-eluting intracoronary stent, atherectomy and angioplasty; each additional coronary artery, coronary artery branch, or bypass graft (list separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

Scope of this Guideline

Emergency percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) is used for management of acute coronary syndromes (ST segment elevation myocardial infarction, non-ST elevation myocardial infarction, or unstable angina pectoris). PCI for the management of stable ischemic heart disease (SIHD) is considered to be elective and is the focus of this document.

Guideline Interpretation

This guideline does not supersede the enrollee's health plan medical policy specific to PCI.

PCI may include any or all of the following: balloon angioplasty, coronary stent placement, or coronary atherectomy. Specific procedure selection is at the discretion of the operating physician. The term PCI applies to intervention on both native coronary arteries and coronary bypass grafts (both arterial and venous).

Determination of the appropriateness of PCI requires knowledge of the results of diagnostic coronary arteriography. In determination of the degree of angiographic disease, this guideline observes the following definition of significant coronary stenosis: $\geq 50\%$ left main stenosis, $\geq 70\%$ non-left main stenosis, or 40%-69% stenosis of an epicardial vessel with fractional flow reserve (FFR) ≤ 0.8 (measured at angiography). References to FFR in this guideline should be interpreted as invasively measured FFR.

Frequently, PCI is performed at the same sitting as diagnostic coronary arteriography. Although there is sometimes clinical justification to separate the two procedures, separate procedures based on facility operational requirements should be avoided wherever possible.

In some clinical situations, coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) may be considered as an alternative to PCI as a method of revascularization. Although the literature addresses the relative indications for PCI versus CABG for populations of patients, it is recognized that clinical characteristics and choices of individual patients must also be considered.

Elective PCI has not been shown to be superior to optimal medical therapy for patients with stable angina pectoris. Therefore every effort should be made to optimize medical therapy before consideration of PCI.

Currently, evidence supporting use of PCI in asymptomatic patients with stable coronary artery disease is lacking. Therefore, PCI is generally reserved for symptomatic patients because, while PCI has been shown to reduce symptoms, reduction in incidence of myocardial infarction or mortality has not been demonstrated.

Although the risk-benefit ratio for any procedure should dictate clinical appropriateness on a case-by-case basis, advanced age, advanced renal disease, advanced malignancy or coagulopathy should be considered relative contraindications to PCI.

Providers who refer patients for PCI and those who perform such procedures are responsible for considering safety issues. In particular, the requirement for intravascular iodinated contrast material, which may have an adverse effect on patients with a history of documented allergic contrast reactions or atopy, as well as on individuals with renal impairment, who are at greater risk for contrast-induced nephropathy.

Since PCI requires the use of fluoroscopy, it is critically important that every effort be made to minimize exposure of the patient and the laboratory staff to ionizing radiation.

It is assumed that all patients with SIHD will be treated with secondary prevention therapies (antihypertensives, lipid lowering agents, antidiabetic agents, antiplatelet agents, etc.) where indicated. In addition, patients with

symptomatic SIHD should receive antianginal medications (e.g., beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, long-acting nitrate preparations, ranolazine). For the purposes of this guideline, a patient is considered to be taking an antianginal agent if (s)he (a) is currently taking the medication at the maximally tolerated dose, (b) is intolerant of the medication, or (c) has a contraindication to that class of medications.

In clinical scenarios where appropriateness of PCI is based on findings at noninvasive testing, only testing performed since the most recent revascularization procedure (PCI or CABG) should be considered.

Table 1. Noninvasive Risk Stratification

High risk (> 3% annual death or myocardial infarction)
1. Severe resting LV dysfunction (LVEF < 35%) not readily explained by noncoronary causes
2. Resting perfusion abnormalities $\geq 10\%$ of the myocardium in patients without prior history or evidence of myocardial infarction
3. Stress ECG findings including ≥ 2 mm of ST-segment depression at low workload or persisting into recovery, exercise-induced ST-segment elevation, or exercise-induced ventricular tachycardia/ventricular fibrillation
4. Severe stress-induced LV dysfunction (peak exercise LVEF < 45% or drop in LVEF with stress $\geq 10\%$)
5. Stress-induced perfusion abnormalities encumbering $\geq 10\%$ myocardium or stress segmental scores indicating multiple vascular territories with abnormalities
6. Stress-induced LV dilation
7. Inducible wall motion abnormality (involving > 2 segments or 2 coronary beds)
8. Wall motion abnormality developing at low dose of dobutamine (≤ 10 mg/kg/min) or at a low heart rate (< 120 beats/min)
9. CAC score > 400 Agatston units
10. Multivessel obstructive CAD ($\geq 70\%$ stenosis) or left main stenosis ($\geq 50\%$ stenosis) on CCTA
Intermediate risk (1% to 3% annual death or myocardial infarction)
1. Mild/moderate resting LV dysfunction (LVEF 35% to 49%) not readily explained by noncoronary causes
2. Resting perfusion abnormalities in 5% to 9.9% of the myocardium in patients without a history or prior evidence of myocardial infarction
3. ≥ 1 mm of ST-segment depression occurring with exertional symptoms
4. Stress-induced perfusion abnormalities encumbering 5% to 9.9% of the myocardium or stress segmental scores (in multiple segments) indicating 1 vascular territory with abnormalities but without LV dilation
5. Small wall motion abnormality involving 1 to 2 segments and only 1 coronary bed
6. CAC score 100 to 399 Agatston units
7. One vessel CAD with $\geq 70\%$ stenosis or moderate CAD stenosis (50% to 69% stenosis) in ≥ 2 arteries on CCTA
Low risk (< 1% annual death or myocardial infarction)
1. Low-risk treadmill score (score ≥ 5) or no new ST segment changes or exercise-induced chest pain symptoms; when achieving maximal levels of exercise
2. Normal or small myocardial perfusion defect at rest or with stress encumbering < 5% of the myocardium*
3. Normal stress or no change of limited resting wall motion abnormalities during stress
4. CAC score < 100 Agatston units
5. No coronary stenosis > 50% on CCTA

*Although the published data are limited, patients with these findings will probably not be at low risk in the presence of either a high-risk treadmill score or severe resting LV dysfunction (LVEF < 35%).

CAC indicates coronary artery calcium; CAD, coronary artery disease; CCTA, coronary computed tomography angiography; LV, left ventricular; LVEF, left ventricular ejection fraction.

Reproduced from Fihn SD, et al. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2012.

Clinical Indications

PCI in patients who have not undergone CABG

The following indications for elective PCI are accompanied by pretest considerations as well as supporting clinical data and prerequisite information. For noninvasive risk stratification, refer to [Table 1](#).

Patients with one vessel coronary artery disease

Symptomatic patients who are receiving only one (1) antianginal medication and have BOTH of the following

- Proximal involvement*
- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

*Proximal involvement refers to involvement of the proximal left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery or of a dominant circumflex vessel.

Symptomatic patients who are receiving maximal antianginal medical therapy and have ANY of the following

- Abnormal noninvasive testing
- No noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8
- Inconclusive noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8

Patients with two vessel coronary artery disease

Symptomatic patients who are receiving only one (1) antianginal medication and have ANY of the following

- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing
- No noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8
- Inconclusive noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8

Symptomatic non-diabetic patients who are receiving no antianginal medication and have BOTH of the following

- Proximal involvement[#]
- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

[#]Proximal involvement refers to involvement of the proximal LAD.

Symptomatic patients who are receiving maximal antianginal medical therapy and have ANY of the following

- Abnormal noninvasive testing
- No noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8
- Inconclusive noninvasive testing since symptom onset and FFR ≤ 0.8

Patients with three vessel coronary artery disease

Symptomatic patients who are receiving maximal antianginal medical therapy and have

- Low disease complexity (e.g., focal stenosis, SYNTAX score ≤ 22)

Symptomatic patients who are receiving only one (1) antianginal medication and have BOTH of the following

- Low disease complexity (e.g., focal stenosis, SYNTAX score ≤ 22)
- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

Symptomatic non-diabetic patients who are receiving no antianginal medication and have BOTH of the following

- Low disease complexity (e.g., focal stenosis, SYNTAX score ≤ 22)
- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

Patients with left main coronary artery disease

Patients who are taking any antianginal therapy and meet ALL of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms
- Disease does not involve the LM bifurcation
- There is no significant CAD in other coronary arteries or (if other disease is present) SYNTAX score is ≤ 22

Patients who are not taking any antianginal therapy and meet ALL of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms
- Disease does not involve the LM bifurcation
- There is no significant CAD in other coronary arteries

PCI in patients who have undergone CABG

Patients with a patent internal mammary artery (IMA) graft to the left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery who are receiving only one (1) antianginal medication and meet ALL of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms
- Stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying one (1) or two (2) vascular territories (other than the LAD)
- Intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing*

**If noninvasive testing has not been performed or is indeterminate, FFR ≤ 0.8 will substitute for this requirement.*

Patients with a patent internal mammary artery (IMA) graft to the left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery who are receiving maximal antianginal therapy and who meet ALL of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms
- Stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying one (1) or two (2) vascular territories (other than the LAD)
- Abnormal (low, intermediate, or high-risk findings) on noninvasive testing*

**If noninvasive testing has not been performed or is indeterminate, FFR ≤ 0.8 will substitute for this requirement.*

Patients with a non-patent internal mammary artery (IMA) graft to the left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery who are not taking any antianginal therapy, have intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing* and meet EITHER of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms and stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying two (2) or three (3) vascular territories (including the LAD)
- No ischemic symptoms and stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying three (3) vascular territories (including the LAD)

**If noninvasive testing has not been performed or is indeterminate, FFR \leq 0.8 will substitute for this requirement.*

Symptomatic patients with a non-patent internal mammary artery (IMA) graft to the left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery who are receiving only one (1) antianginal medication and meet ONE of the following criteria

- Stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying only the LAD territory and intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing*
- Stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying two (2) vascular territories (including the LAD) and abnormal (low, intermediate, or high-risk findings) on noninvasive testing*
- Stenosis(es) in a native vessel(s) or bypass graft(s) supplying three (3) vascular territories (including the LAD) and intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing*

**If noninvasive testing has not been performed or is indeterminate, FFR \leq 0.8 will substitute for this requirement.*

Patients with a non-patent internal mammary artery (IMA) graft to the left anterior descending (LAD) coronary artery who are receiving maximal antianginal therapy and meet ALL of the following criteria

- Ischemic symptoms
- Abnormal (low, intermediate, or high-risk findings) on noninvasive testing*

**If noninvasive testing has not been performed or is indeterminate, FFR \leq 0.8 will substitute for this requirement.*

Other scenarios

Scheduled to undergo percutaneous valvular procedures (e.g., TAVR/TAVI or mitral valve repair) when ANY of the following apply

- Left main or triple vessel CAD
- One (1) or two (2) vessel CAD and intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing
- One (1) or two (2) vessel CAD with proximal LAD involvement, low-risk findings on noninvasive testing and ischemic symptoms despite any antianginal therapy
- One (1) or two (2) vessel CAD without proximal LAD involvement, low-risk findings on noninvasive testing and ischemic symptoms despite maximal antianginal therapy

Scheduled to undergo renal transplantation when ANY of the following apply and SYNTAX score is \leq 22

- Persistent symptoms despite maximal antianginal therapy
- Persistent symptoms despite any antianginal therapy in non-diabetic patients with intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

- Ischemic symptoms in non-diabetic patients who are not taking any antianginal therapy and have left main disease, triple vessel disease, or proximal LAD disease, with intermediate or high-risk findings on noninvasive testing

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History

Status	Review Date	Effective Date	Action
Archived	-	03/13/2022	Archived. Not to be used for dates of service on or after 03/13/2022.
Updated	-	06/13/2021	Added HCPCS codes C9600, C9601, C9602, C9603, C9604, C9605, C9607, C9608.
Reaffirmed	02/03/2020	Unchanged	Independent Multispecialty Physician Panel (IMPP) review. Guideline reaffirmed.
Revised	07/11/2018	03/09/2019	IMPP review. Added the General Clinical Guideline.
Revised	03/01/2018	06/11/2018	IMPP review. Added clarification of inappropriateness of PCI in asymptomatic patients.
Revised	09/07/2017	01/02/2018	IMPP review. Incorporated American College of Cardiology appropriate use for PCI in stable coronary artery disease. Original effective date.
Created	08/27/2015	-	Date of origin.