

CHAMPVA POLICY MANUAL

CHAPTER: 2
SECTION: 20.10
TITLE: DESTRUCTION OF NERVE BY RADIOFREQUENCY
THERMONEUROLYSIS

AUTHORITY: 38 USC 1713; 38 CFR 17.270(a) and 17.272(a)

RELATED AUTHORITY: 32 CFR 199.4(c)

I. EFFECTIVE DATE

December 4, 1986

II. PROCEDURE CODE(S)

64600-64610

III. DESCRIPTION

A procedure used in the alleviation of chronic pain by selective denervation. Research has shown that radiofrequency current, when applied to peripheral nerves, has the effect of selectively destroying small nerve fibers while at the same time retaining the larger nerve fibers. In clinical application this has had the effect of eliminating abnormal pain and triggering functions while preserving normal tactile sensation for the patient.

IV. POLICY

Radiofrequency thermoneurolysis is covered as a procedure of last resort only after the conditions listed under Policy Considerations, paragraph C, have been ruled out.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Radiofrequency thermoneurolysis involving the stylomandibular ligaments is indicated for patients with the following symptoms:

1. tenderness below the lobe of the ear with discomfort; or
2. pressure simulating third molar trying to erupt.

B. In later stage:

1. aching mandible and gonial area, lower molar teeth on the same side ache and throb;
2. ear fullness, stuffiness and pain;
3. throat soreness, tightness and lateral pharyngeal wall pain;
4. temporomandibular joint pain at the condyle, with possible clicking or locking of the articular disc and restriction of normal condylar function;
5. coronoid process pain and pain at the zygomatic arch;
6. temple pain and headache; or
7. eye pain and possible alteration of vision.

C. For purposes of paragraphs A and B, painful disorders of, or directly related to, the following syndromes must have been ruled out as the source of pain.

1. Temporomandibular joint (see [Chapter 2, Section 5.3](#), *Mandibular Bone Grafts* and [Chapter 2, Section 19.4](#), *Pectus Excavatum*).
2. Temporal tendon.
3. Stylohyoid ligament.
4. Hyoid bone.
5. An elongated styloid process.
6. Sympathetic cervical ganglia.
7. Omohyoid muscle.
8. Cervical spine.
9. Brachial plexus.

END OF POLICY