

CHAMPVA POLICY MANUAL

CHAPTER: 2
SECTION: 29.3
TITLE: COMPLICATIONS (UNFORTUNATE **SEQUELAE**) RESULTING FROM
NONCOVERED SURGERY OR TREATMENT

AUTHORITY: 38 CFR 17.270(a) and 17.272(a)

RELATED AUTHORITY: 32 CFR 199.4(e)(9)

TRICARE POLICY MANUAL: Chapter 3, Section 1.1

I. EFFECTIVE DATE

April 11, 1984

II. POLICY

Benefits are available for the otherwise covered treatment of complications resulting from a noncovered surgery or treatment when the complication represents a medical condition separate from the condition that the noncovered treatment or surgery was directed toward, AND treatment of the complication is not essentially similar to the noncovered procedure.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. A complication may be considered a separate medical condition when it causes a systemic effect, occurs in a different body system from the noncovered treatment or is an unexpected complication **that** is untoward based upon prior clinical experience with the procedure.

B. Untoward and unexpected complications that may be covered when occurring in a different body system than the noncovered treatment was directed toward, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. cardiac failure or arrest,
2. hypovolemic shock,
3. liver failure,
4. phlebitis,
5. pulmonary embolism,

6. renal failure, and
7. respiratory insufficiency.

C. Claims for treatment of complications not listed above should be referred for a medical review.

D. Complications (unfortunate sequelae) resulting from noncovered initial surgery or treatment. Benefits are available for otherwise covered services and supplies required in the treatment of complications resulting from a noncovered incident of treatment (such as nonadjunctive dental care, transsexual surgery, and cosmetic surgery) but only if the later complication represents a separate medical condition such as a systemic infection, cardiac arrest, and acute drug reaction. Benefits may not be extended for any later care or procedures related to the complications similar to the initial episode of care (and thus not covered). Examples: the repair of facial scarring resulting from dermabrasion for acne or repair of a prolapsed vagina in a biological male who had undergone transsexual surgery.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. A complication is not covered when:

1. the complication occurs in the same body system or the same anatomical area of the noncovered treatment, and
2. the complication is one that commonly occurs.

B. Complications from noncovered surgery or treatment are not covered. Examples of noncovered services are provided below.

1. Common complications such as local infections, defective wound healing, pain, and hypertrophic scars.
2. Complications from augmentation mammoplasty.
 - a. Breast asymmetry
 - b. Breast firmness
 - c. Extrusion of prosthesis
 - d. Hematoma
 - e. Nipple anesthesia
 - f. Scar contractures
 - g. Serous extravasation

3. Complications from a noncovered rhinoplasty.
 - a. Bony framework deformities
 - b. Distortion of nose
 - c. Hematoma
 - d. Hemorrhage
 - e. Nasal tip and nostril deformities
 - f. Scar contracture
4. Complications from a noncovered blepharoplasty.
 - a. Asymmetry
 - b. Dry eye syndrome
 - c. Ectropion
 - d. Enophthalmus
 - e. Hematoma
 - f. Inclusion cyst formation
 - g. Ptosis
5. Complications from noncovered abortion (see [Chapter 2, Section 14.2, Abortions](#)).
 - a. Uterine perforation
 - b. Hemorrhage
 - c. Cervical laceration
 - d. Dilation and curettage (D&C) to remove retained placenta

END OF POLICY