



Subject: General Anesthesia for Dental Procedures

Effective Date: 4/1/16

Review Date: 12/22

DESCRIPTION

While most dental care is provided in a traditional dental office setting utilizing local anesthesia and, when indicated, a variety of adjunctive pharmacologic and behavioral guidance techniques, a subset of patients cannot benefit from routine approaches. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recognizes that non-pharmacological behavior guidance techniques are not viable for some pediatric dental patients. Some children and patients with special health care needs have treatment conditions, acute situational anxiety, uncooperative age-appropriate behavior, immature cognitive functioning, disabilities, or medical conditions that require deep sedation/general anesthesia to undergo dental procedures in a safe and humane fashion. Included in this group are infants and children who have not yet developed the ability to comprehend the need for their treatment nor the effective and appropriate skills to cope with invasive and potentially uncomfortable and psychologically threatening procedures. For many of these patients, treatment under general anesthesia in a hospital, outpatient facility, dental office or clinic represents the optimum or only venue to deliver necessary oral health care.

DEFINITION

General anesthesia: a drug-induced loss of consciousness during which patients are not arousable, even by painful stimulation. The ability to maintain ventilator function is often impaired. Patients often require assistance in maintaining a patent airway, and positive pressure ventilation may be required because of depressed spontaneous ventilation or drug-induced depression of neuromuscular function. Cardiovascular function may be impaired.

COVERAGE

The OSU Health Plan considers general anesthesia for dental procedures medically necessary for the following indications:

1. Patients, including infants, exhibiting physical, intellectual, or medically compromising conditions, for which dental treatment under local anesthesia, with or without additional adjunctive techniques and modalities, cannot be expected to provide a humane and successful result and which, under general anesthesia, can be expected to produce a superior result.
2. Patients demonstrating dental treatment needs for which local anesthesia is indicated, but is ineffective because of acute infection, anatomic variation, or allergy.
3. An extremely uncooperative, fearful, anxious, or uncommunicative patient with dental needs of such magnitude or clinically apparent and functionally threatening to the well-being of the individual that treatment should not be postponed or deferred and for whom lack of treatment can be expected to result in dental or oral pain, infection, loss of teeth or other increased oral or dental morbidity or mortality.

4. Patients who have sustained extensive oral-facial and/or dental trauma, for which treatment under local anesthesia would be ineffective or compromised.

EXCLUSIONS

Children whose dental needs are minor and those children whose medical status precludes use of general anesthesia.

Dental services are not covered under the OSU Health Plan medical benefits.

CODES

00170	Anesthesia for intraoral procedures, including biopsy; not otherwise specified
41899	Unlisted procedure, dentoalveolar structures [when used for facility fee only]

REFERENCES

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- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), Council on Clinical Affairs. Policy on third-party reimbursement of medical fees related to sedation/general anesthesia. Original policy May 1989, Revised 2003. Oral Health Policies. In: AAPD Reference Manual 2004-2005. Chicago, IL: AAPD; 2004:55-56.
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