

Policy Name:	Intracellular Micronutrient Analysis: MicroNutrient Testing; Intracellular Mineral Electrolyte Analysis
Effective Date:	10/15/2018

Important Information – Please Read Before Using This Policy

These services may or may not be covered by all Medica plans. Please refer to the member's plan document for specific coverage information. If there is a difference between this general information and the member's plan document, the member's plan document will be used to determine coverage. With respect to Medicare and Minnesota Health Care Programs, this policy will apply unless those programs require different coverage. Members may contact Medica Customer Service at the phone number listed on their member identification card to discuss their benefits more specifically. Providers with questions about this Medica coverage policy may call the Medica Provider Service Center toll-free at 1-800-458-5512.

Medica coverage policies are not medical advice. Members should consult with appropriate health care providers to obtain needed medical advice, care and treatment.

Coverage Policy

Micronutrient testing is investigative and therefore **NOT COVERED**.

Intracellular mineral electrolyte analysis is investigative and therefore **NOT COVERED**.

Note: This policy is no longer scheduled for routine review of the scientific literature.

Description

Intracellular micronutrient analysis is purported to reveal micro-deficiencies of nutrients at sub-cellular levels that are not detected with standard serum or urine tests. Examples of micronutrients include, but are not limited to, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, amino acids, carbohydrates, and essential ions. Proponents claim that these nutrient micro-deficiencies suppress immune function and contribute to diseases and conditions such as malnutrition, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, immune system disorders, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis, chronic fatigue syndrome, hormonal imbalance, and Alzheimer's disease. Although normally ordered by a health care provider, test kits are also marketed directly to consumers.

Specimens usually submitted for analysis include blood cells or tissue cells. Micronutrient testing, commonly referred to as functional intracellular analysis (FIA) or essential metabolic analysis, is a spectrum of laboratory tests performed on live blood cells (usually lymphocytes). The tests are conducted on live blood cells grown in a culture medium deficient in those nutrients under consideration. The observed growth rate is purported to indicate which nutrients are lacking within the cells. An alternative method involves placing the cells on a slide under a special microscope connected to a viewing screen. The patient then views the cellular images on the screen while the practitioner explains the results.

Intracellular mineral electrolyte analysis is performed using buccal cells collected from under the tongue and applied to a microscope slide. The testing laboratory exposes the tissue-prepared slide to a high energy, scanning electron microscope beam equipped with computerized elemental X-ray analysis (EXA). The applied beam results in the intracellular minerals giving off energy that can be computer analyzed and translated into an energy pattern that identifies and measures the elements within the cell.

Medica Coverage Policy



SpectraCell Laboratories (Houston, TX) is one example of a commercial laboratory offering functional intracellular analysis of micronutrients from live blood cells grown in a culture medium. SpectraCell markets a comprehensive nutritional panel that assesses 33 analytes: vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants, carbohydrate metabolism, and fatty acids and metabolites.

IntraCellular Diagnostics Inc. (Medford, OR) is an example of a commercial laboratory offering intracellular mineral electrolyte analysis from buccal tissue samples. The test panel is marketed as the ExaTest™. Magnesium deficiency is a main focus in this panel.

Any Lab Test Now® is a franchise that offers patients the opportunity to establish a “health baseline” by providing multiple blood tests and panels, including micronutrient testing. No physician’s order is required to obtain services.

FDA Approval

Micronutrient tests performed at a single reference laboratory are not subject to FDA approval. Testing laboratories are subject to Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) of 1988 regulations. Practitioners who do live cell analysis are required to have CLIA approval for high-complexity testing. Except for freestanding commercial laboratories, blood banks, hospitals, and large medical offices, very few facilities have high-complexity approval.

Prior Authorization

Prior authorization is not applicable. Claims for this service are subject to retrospective review and denial of coverage, as investigative services are not eligible for reimbursement.

Coding Considerations

Use the current applicable CPT/HCPCS code(s).

Original Effective Date: 11/1/2009

Re-Review Date(s): 7/18/2012
7/15/2015
7/18/2018

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