

Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or Replacement)

Description/Background

Orthopedic footwear is generally used to assist gait, reduce pain, decrease weight bearing, control movement and minimize worsening of a deformity.

Refer to Therapeutic Shoe for Individuals with Diabetes policy (A5500-A5513) modifications and inserts.

Policy Statement

Orthopedic footwear is **reasonable and necessary** for members meeting policy guidelines.

For custom fabricated foot orthotics, the records document why the member's needs cannot be met with prefabricated (custom fitted) or prefabricated off-the-shelf foot orthotics

Policy Guidelines

Medicare Member Coverage Criteria:

Refer to Medicare policy (L33641) and article (A52481) for coverage criteria.

Non-Medicare Member Coverage Criteria:

Orthopedic footwear is reasonable and necessary for **adult** members (over 21 years of age) if:

- Criteria I (A, B, C, or D) are met; or
- Criteria II (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, or J) are met.

Orthopedic footwear is reasonable and necessary for **pediatric** members (under 21 years of age) if:

- Criteria I (A, B, C or D) are met; or
- Criteria III (A, B, C, D, or E) are met.

(In both adult and pediatric cases, criteria IV and V must also be met)



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- I. Must be ordered by the Member's treating practitioner and any of the following applies:
 - A. Required to accommodate a leg length discrepancy of ¼ inch or greater.
 - B. Required to accommodate a size discrepancy between both feet of one size or greater.
 - C. Required to accommodate needs related to a partial foot prosthesis, clubfoot, or plantar fasciitis.
 - D. Required to accommodate a brace.
- II. Adults (skeletally mature feet):
 - A. Acute plantar fasciitis
 - B. Acute sport-related injuries (including diagnoses related to inflammatory problems, e.g., bursitis, tendonitis)
 - C. Calcaneal bursitis (acute or chronic)
 - D. Calcaneal spurs (heel spurs)
 - E. Conditions related to diabetes (see section above on therapeutic shoes for diabetes for a complete list of medically necessary diagnoses)
 - F. Inflammatory conditions (i.e., sesamoiditis; submetatarsal bursitis; synovitis; tenosynovitis; synovial cyst; osteomyelitis; metatarsalgia and plantar fascial fibromatosis)
 - G. Medial osteoarthritis of the knee (lateral wedge insoles)
 - H. Musculoskeletal/arthropathic deformities (including deformities of the joint or skeleton that impairs walking in a normal shoe, e.g., bunions, hallux valgus, talipes deformities, pes deformities, anomalies of toes)
 - I. Neurologically impaired feet (including neuroma; tarsal tunnel syndrome; ganglionic cyst; and neuropathies involving the feet,

 Page 2 of 16

 Confidential and Proprietary



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including those associated with peripheral vascular disease, diabetes, carcinoma, drugs, toxins, and chronic renal disease)

J. Vascular conditions (including ulceration, poor circulation, peripheral vascular disease, Buerger's disease (thromboangiitis obliterans), chronic thrombophlebitis).

Foot orthotics have no proven value for back pain, knee pain (other than medial osteoarthritis), pes planus (flat feet), pronation, corns and calluses, hammertoes, hip osteoarthritis, and lower leg injuries.

- III. Children (skeletally immature feet):
 - A. Hallux Valgus deformities
 - B. In-toe or out-toe gait
 - C. Musculoskeletal weakness (e.g., pronation, pes planus)
 - D. Structural deformities (e.g., tarsal coalitions)
 - E. Torsional conditions (e.g., metatarsus adductus, tibial torsion, femoral torsion)

and, for both adult and pediatric members:

- IV. The member must have symptoms associated with the particular foot condition (foot orthotics are not considered medically necessary when the foot condition does not cause symptoms); *and*
- V. The member has failed to respond to a course of appropriate conservative treatment (e.g., physical therapy, injections, strapping, anti-inflammatory medications). (Orthotics should not be considered first line therapy.)

Exclusions/Limitations:

General

Foot orthotics are considered experimental and investigational for the treatment of joint hypermobility syndrome.



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AposTherapy (biomechanical shoe-like device) for the management of various back, hip, and knee conditions is considered experimental and investigational because its effectiveness has not been established.

The UNFO-S (an adductus-positioning device) for the management of metatarsus adductus and metatarsus varus is considered experimental and investigational because its effectiveness has not been established.

The Orpyx sensory insoles for reduction of diabetic foot ulcer recurrence are considered experimental and investigational because their effectiveness has not been established.

Deluxe features of therapeutic shoes have no proven value. A deluxe feature is defined as a feature that does not contribute to the therapeutic function of the shoe. It may include, but is not limited to style, color, or type of leather.

3D-printed insoles are considered experimental, investigational, or unproven for improving balance in the elderly and managing abnormal peak plantar pressure in Charcot neuroarthropathy.

Shoe modifications and replacements:

Medical necessity criteria for replacements of or modifications to existing customized shoes is based on the same criteria noted for the shoe itself. Replacement of a pair of shoes, or modifications, should be based on necessity (e.g., worn out, loss of effectiveness), not for convenience or style change.

Coding Guidelines

The right (RT) and/ or left (LT) modifiers must be used with all footwear HCPCS codes in this policy. When the same code for bilateral items (left and right) are billed on the same date of service, bill for both items on the same claim line using the RT/LT modifiers and 2 units of service. Claims billed without modifiers RT and/or LT will be rejected as incorrect coding.

Charcot Restraint Orthotic Walker - CROW Boot - Coding

Code L4631 describes a Charcot's restraint orthotic walker (CROW) orthosis. Code L4631 is a custom fabricated ankle-foot orthosis which has all of the following characteristics:



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- 1. Designed to maintain the foot at a fixed position of 0° (i.e., perpendicular to the lower leg); and,
- 2. Allows for varus or valgus deformity correction; and,
- 3. Contains a rocker bottom sole with a custom arch support; and,
- 4. Incorporates a rigid anterior tibial shell; and,
- 5. Used by a beneficiary who is ambulatory; and,
- 6. Has a soft interface
- 7. Totally encapsulated.

Code L4631 includes all additions including straps and closures. No additional codes may be billed with code L4631.

HCPCS Level II Codes and Description

- L3000 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, 'UCB' TYPE, BERKELEY SHELL, EACH
- L3001 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, SPENCO, EACH
- L3002 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, PLASTAZOTE OR EQUAL, EACH
- L3003 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, SILICONE GEL, EACH
- L3010 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, LONGITUDINAL ARCH SUPPORT, EACH
- L3020 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, LONGITUDINAL/ METATARSAL SUPPORT, EACH
- L3030 FOOT, INSERT, REMOVABLE, FORMED TO PATIENT FOOT, EACH
- L3031 FOOT, INSERT/PLATE, REMOVABLE, ADDITION TO LOWER EXTREMITY ORTHOSIS, HIGH STRENGTH, LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIAL, ALL HYBRID LAMINATION/PREPREG COMPOSITE, EACH
- L3040 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, REMOVABLE, PREMOLDED, LONGITUDINAL, EACH



Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or Replacement)

- L3050 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, REMOVABLE, PREMOLDED, METATARSAL, EACH
- L3060 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, REMOVABLE, PREMOLDED, LONGITUDINAL/METATARSAL, EACH
- L3070 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, NON-REMOVABLE ATTACHED TO SHOE, LONGITUDINAL, EACH
- L3080 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, NON-REMOVABLE ATTACHED TO SHOE, METATARSAL, EACH
- L3090 FOOT, ARCH SUPPORT, NON-REMOVABLE ATTACHED TO SHOE, LONGITUDINAL/METATARSAL, EACH
- L3100 HALLUS-VALGUS NIGHT DYNAMIC SPLINT
- L3140 FOOT, ABDUCTION ROTATION BAR, INCLUDING SHOES
- L3150 FOOT, ABDUCTION ROTATATION BAR, WITHOUT SHOES
- L3160 FOOT, ADJUSTABLE SHOE-STYLED POSITIONING DEVICE
- L3170 FOOT, PLASTIC, SILICONE OR EQUAL, HEEL STABILIZER, EACH
- L3201 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, OXFORD WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, INFANT
- L3202 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, OXFORD WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, CHILD
- L3203 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, OXFORD WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, JUNIOR
- L3204 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, HIGHTOP WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, INFANT
- L3206 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, HIGHTOP WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, CHILD
- L3207 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, HIGHTOP WITH SUPINATOR OR PRONATOR, JUNIOR



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Replacement)							
L3208	SURGICAL BOOT, EACH, INFANT						
L3209	SURGICAL BOOT, EACH, CHILD						
L3211	SURGICAL BOOT, EACH, JUNIOR						
L3212	BENESCH BOOT, PAIR, INFANT						
L3213	BENESCH BOOT, PAIR, CHILD						
L3214	BENESCH BOOT, PAIR, JUNIOR						
L3215	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, LADIES SHOE, OXFORD, EACH						
L3216	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, LADIES SHOE, DEPTH INLAY, EACH						
L3217	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, LADIES SHOE, HIGHTOP, DEPTH INLAY, EACH						
L3219	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, MENS SHOE, OXFORD, EACH						
L3221	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, MENS SHOE, DEPTH INLAY, EACH						
L3222	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, MENS SHOE, HIGHTOP, DEPTH INLAY, EACH						
L3224	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, WOMAN'S SHOE, OXFORD, USED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A BRACE (ORTHOSIS)						
L3225	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, MAN'S SHOE, OXFORD, USED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A BRACE (ORTHOSIS)						
L3230	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, CUSTOM SHOE, DEPTH INLAY, EACH						
L3250	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, CUSTOM MOLDED SHOE, REMOVABLE INNER MOLD, PROSTHETIC SHOE, EACH						
L3251	FOOT, SHOE MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, SILICONE SHOE, EACH						
L3252	FOOT, SHOE MOLDED TO PATIENT MODEL, PLASTAZOTE (OR						

L3254 NON-STANDARD SIZE OR WIDTH

EACH

SIMILAR), CUSTOM FABRICATED, EACH

L3253 FOOT, MOLDED SHOE PLASTAZOTE (OR SIMILAR) CUSTOM FITTED,



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L3255	NON-STANDARD SIZE OR LENGTH
L3257	ORTHOPEDIC FOOTWEAR, ADDITIONAL CHARGE FOR SPLIT SIZE
L3260	SURGICAL BOOT/SHOE, EACH
L3265	PLASTAZOTE SANDAL, EACH
L3300	LIFT, ELEVATION, HEEL, TAPERED TO METATARSALS, PER INCH
L3310	LIFT, ELEVATION, HEEL AND SOLE, NEOPRENE, PER INCH
L3320	LIFT, ELEVATION, HEEL AND SOLE, CORK, PER INCH
L3330	LIFT, ELEVATION, METAL EXTENSION (SKATE)
L3332	LIFT, ELEVATION, INSIDE SHOE, TAPERED, UP TO ONE-HALF INCH
L3334	LIFT, ELEVATION, HEEL, PER INCH
L3340	HEEL WEDGE, SACH
L3350	HEEL WEDGE
L3360	SOLE WEDGE, OUTSIDE SOLE
L3370	SOLE WEDGE, BETWEEN SOLE
L3380	CLUBFOOT WEDGE
L3390	OUTFLARE WEDGE
L3400	METATARSAL BAR WEDGE, ROCKER
L3410	METATARSAL BAR WEDGE, BETWEEN SOLE
L3420	FULL SOLE AND HEEL WEDGE, BETWEEN SOLE
L3430	HEEL, COUNTER, PLASTIC REINFORCED
L3440	HEEL, COUNTER, LEATHER REINFORCED
L3450	HEEL, SACH CUSHION TYPE
L3455	HEEL, NEW LEATHER, STANDARD
L3460	HEEL, NEW RUBBER, STANDARD



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L3465 HEEL, THOMAS WITH WEDGE

	L3470	HEEL, THOMAS EXTENDED TO BALL
	L3480	HEEL, PAD AND DEPRESSION FOR SPUR
	L3485	HEEL, PAD, REMOVABLE FOR SPUR
	L3500	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, INSOLE, LEATHER
	L3510	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, INSOLE, RUBBER
	L3520	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, INSOLE, FELT COVERED WITH LEATHER
	L3530	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, SOLE, HALF
	L3540	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, SOLE, FULL
	L3550	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, TOE TAP STANDARD
	L3560	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, TOE TAP, HORSESHOE
	L3570	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, SPECIAL EXTENSION TO INSTEP (LEATHER WITH EYELETS)
	L3580	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, CONVERT INSTEP TO VELCRO CLOSURE
	L3590	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, CONVERT FIRM SHOE COUNTER TO SOFT COUNTER
	L3595	ORTHOPEDIC SHOE ADDITION, MARCH BAR
	L3600	TRANSFER OF AN ORTHOSIS FROM ONE SHOE TO ANOTHER, CALIPER PLATE, EXISTING
	L3610	TRANSFER OF AN ORTHOSIS FROM ONE SHOE TO ANOTHER, CALIPER PLATE, NEW
	L3620	TRANSFER OF AN ORTHOSIS FROM ONE SHOE TO ANOTHER, SOLID STIRRUP, EXISTING

L3630 TRANSFER OF AN ORTHOSIS FROM ONE SHOE TO ANOTHER, SOLID



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STIRRUP, NEW

- L3640 TRANSFER OF AN ORTHOSIS FROM ONE SHOE TO ANOTHER, DENNIS BROWNE SPLINT (RIVETON), BOTH SHOES
- L3649 ORTHOPEDIC SHOE, MODIFICATION, ADDITION OR TRANSFER, NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED
- L4631 ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS, WALKING BOOT TYPE, VARUS/VALGUS CORRECTION, ROCKER BOTTOM, ANTERIOR TIBIAL SHELL, SOFT INTERFACE, CUSTOM ARCH SUPPORT, PLASTIC OR OTHER MATERIAL, INCLUDES STRAPS AND CLOSURES, CUSTOM FABRICATED

Important Note:

Northwood's Medical Policies are developed to assist Northwood in administering plan benefits and determining whether a particular DMEPOS product or service is reasonable and necessary. Equipment that is used primarily and customarily for a non-medical purpose is not considered durable medical equipment.

Coverage determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and are subject to all of the terms, conditions, limitations, and exclusions of the member's contract including medical necessity requirements.

The conclusion that a DMEPOS product or service is reasonable and necessary does not constitute coverage. The member's contract defines which DMEPOS product or service is covered, excluded or limited. The policies provide for clearly written, reasonable and current criteria that have been approved by Northwood's Medical Director.

The clinical criteria and medical policies provide guidelines for determining the medical necessity for specific DMEPOS products or services. In all cases, final benefit determinations are based on the applicable contract language. To the extent there are any conflicts between medical policy guidelines and applicable contract language, the contract language prevails. Medical policy is not intended to override the policy that defines the member's benefits, nor is it intended to dictate to providers how to direct care. Northwood Medical policies shall not be interpreted to limit the benefits afforded to



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Medicare or Medicaid members by law and regulation and Northwood will use the applicable state requirements to determine required quantity limit guidelines.

Northwood's policies do not constitute medical advice. Northwood does not provide or recommend treatment to members. Members should consult with their treating practitioner in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Northwood follows all CMS National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), as applicable.

Cross Reference to Related Policies and Procedures

- CGS Administrators, LLC. Jurisdiction B DME MAC, Orthopedic Footwear. Local Coverage Determination No. L33641 Last accessed/reviewed December 11, 2025.
- 2. Noridian Healthcare Solutions, LLC. Orthopedic Footwear. Local Coverage Determination No. L33641. Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Carrier Jurisdiction A; revised January 1, 2020. Reviewed December 17, 2019, December 2020. Last accessed/reviewed December 5, 2022
- 3. Aetna: Foot Orthotics http://www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/400 499/0451.html Last accessed/reviewed December 11, 2025.
- 4. Cigna; Coverage Policy Number 0543 Orthotic Devices and Shoes; https://static.cigna.com/assets/chcp/pdf/coveragePolicies/medical/mm_0543_coveragepositioncriteria_orthotic_devices_shoes.pdf Last accessed/reviewed December 11, 2025.
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Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or Replacement)

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- 10. Neal D, Adams IM, eds. Common Foot Disorders: Diagnosis and Management. 2nd ed. Edinburgh, UK: Churchill Livingstone; 1985.
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- 17. Ferrari J, Higgins JPT, Prior TD. Interventions for treating hallux valgus (abductovalgus) and bunions. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2004;(1):CD000964.
- 18. Brouwer RW, Jakma TS, Verhagen AP, et al. Braces and orthoses for treating osteoarthritis of the knee. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2005;(1):CD004020.
- 19. Powell M, Seid M, Szer IS. Efficacy of custom foot orthotics in improving pain and functional status in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis: A randomized trial. J Rheumatol. 2005;32(5):943-950.
- 20. Farrow SJ, Kingsley GH, Scott DL. Interventions for foot disease in rheumatoid arthritis: A systematic review. Arthritis Rheum. 2005;53(4):593-602.

Page 12 of 16

Confidential and Proprietary



Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or Replacement)

- 21. Clark H, Rome K, Plant M, et al. A critical review of foot orthoses in the rheumatoid arthritic foot. Rheumatology (Oxford). 2006;45(2):139-145.
- 22. Reilly KA, Barker KL, Shamley D. A systematic review of lateral wedge orthotics—how useful are they in the management of medial compartment osteoarthritis? Knee. 2006;13(3):177-183.

Change/Authorization History

Revision Number	Date	Description of Change	Prepared/Reviewed by	Approved by	Review Date:	Effective Date:
A	Nov.2006	Initial Release	Rosanne Brugnoni	Ken Fasse	n/a	
01	Jan.2008	Under Exclusions, HCPCS code A 9283 was added	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse		
02		Annual Review / no changes	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse	Dec. 2008	
03	10-01-09	Policy update. Revised RT/LT modifier instructions. Changed SADMERC to PDAC	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse		
04	12-22-09	Policy updated to include CROW walker information. Annual Review/ no additional changes	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse	Dec. 2009	
05	12-03-10	Annual Review – No changes	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse	Dec.2010	
06	03-21-11	Added info that providers must include when submitting a claim for Replacement Orthopedic Footwear.	Susan Glomb	Ken Fasse		



Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or

Replacement)

Replacement)						
07	6-30-11	Policy updated to reflect current practice.	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri		
08	07-20-11	Added Important Note to all Medical Policies	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri		
09	11-30-11	Annual Review. Added References to Policy	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri	Nov. 2011	
10	04-04-12	Added reference to NH Medicaid	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri		
11	08-21-12	Added Metatarsalgia to coverage criteria for adults.	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri	August 2012	
12	12-3-12	Annual Review – No changes	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri	Dec 12	
13	12-18-13	Annual review. No changes	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri		
14	12-4-14	Annual Review. No changes	Susan Glomb	Dr. B. Almasri		
15	12-16-15	Annual Review. Included information regarding refereeing to Medicare coverage for Medicare members. Updated references.	Lisa Wojno	Dr. B. Almasri		
16	12-08-16	Annual Review. No Changes.	Lisa Wojno	Dr. B. Almasri	December 2016	
17	12-20-17	Annual review. No changes.	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 2017	
18	12-12-18	Annual review. Per Medicare guidelines, an order is not required for a heel or sole replacement or transfer of a shoe to a brace. Medicare references updated.	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 2018	



Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications – Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or

Replacement)

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19	12-17-19	Annual review. No changes.	Lisa Wojno	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 2019	December 2019		
20	8-27-20	Revised Coverage Criteria verbiage for clarity: Orthopedic footwear is reasonable and necessary for adult members (over 21 years of age) if: Criteria I (A, B, C, or D) are met; or Criteria II (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, or J) are met Orthopedic footwear is reasonable and necessary for pediatric members (under 21 years of age) if: Criteria I (A, B, C or D) are met; or Criteria III (A, B, C, D, or E) are met (In both adult and pediatric cases, criteria IV and V must also be met)	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	August 27, 2020	August 2020		
21	12-11-20	Annual Review. Updated 'physician' to 'practitioner'.	Lisa Wojno	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 2020	December 2020		
22	12-8-21	Annual review. Added NCD, LCD verbiage to "Important Note". The AposTherapy, UNFO-S and Orpyx are considered experimental and investigational because their effectiveness has not been established.	Carol Dimech/Susan Glomb	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 8, 2021	December 8, 2021		
23	9-9-22	Added new HCPCS code K1015 to non-covered	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	9-9-22	4-1-21		



Orthopedic Footwear (Inserts, Arch Support/Removable/Pre-molded, Abduction/Rotation Bars, Footwear, Shoe Modifications — Lifts/Wedges/Heels, Miscellaneous Shoe Additions, Transfer or

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		code list; added references.						
24	12-5-22	Annual review. No changes.	Lisa Wojno	Dr. C. Lerchin	12-5-22	December 2022		
25	4-6-23	Added HCPCS code L4631 description, clarification of coding for CROW orthosis.	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	4-6-23			
26	12-6-23	Annual review. No changes.	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	December 6, 2023	December 6, 2023		
27	12-10-24	Annual review. Removed HCPCS code K1015; per CMS, this code is considered "deleted" effective 1/1/24.	Carol Dimech	Dr. C. Lerchin	12-10-24	12-10-24		
28	12- 11/2025	Annual review. for custom fabricated foot orthotics, the records document why the member's needs cannot be met with prefabricated (custom fitted) or prefabricated off-the-shelf foot orthotics; and (ii) state that 3D-printed insoles are considered experimental, investigational, or unproven for improving balance in the elderly and managing abnormal peak plantar pressure in Charcot neuroarthropathy.	Susan Kazmierski	Dr. C. Lerchin	12-11-25	12-11-25		