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Here is a summary of what Medicare/Medicaid and many of the Private insurances require physician notes to include for coverage of knee braces. Both a and b listed below must be documented in the physical exam.

**Knee Brace: Ligamentous Injury**

- a. The physician must state within the physical examination that the patient has knee instability present.
- b. The physician must document the testing performed on physical examination that confirms the presence of joint laxity. For example, an ACL tear, insurance requires documentation of either a positive Drawer test and/or a positive Lachman test.

**Knee Brace: Osteoarthritis/Unloading**

- a. The physician must state within the physical examination that the patient has knee instability present.
- b. The physician must document the testing performed on physical examination that confirms the presence of joint laxity. With an Osteoarthritis diagnosis, insurance requires documentation of a Varus/Valgus Stress Test with a numerical degree of instability.

If the doctor is ordering a Custom Fabricated knee brace, additional details are required. It is essential the physician dictate in his/her notes the specific reasons this type of device is necessary. Common examples may include:

- Deformity of the leg or knee
- Size of thigh and calf (smaller or larger than average)
- Minimal muscle mass upon which to suspend an orthosis

**Please Note:** Medicare no longer accepts letters of medical necessity as a form of documentation for knee braces. **The documentation must be in the patient's medical record within the physical examination section.**

This briefly covers the current criteria for frequently prescribed knee braces. Thank you for helping provide this required documentation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office.