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Medicare Documentation Requirements

Custom AFO/KAFO

Medicare Documentation Requirements:

I. Practitioner must document why a *Prefabricated device*****

Will Not work.

II. Practitioner must document one of the qualifiers below:

1. The patient has a condition necessitating the orthosis, which is expected to be permanent or of long-standing duration (more than six months).
2. There is a need to control the knee, ankle or foot in more than one plane.
3. The patient has a documented neurological, circulatory or orthopedic status that requires custom fabricating over a model (ie to prevent tissue injury).
4. The patient has a healing fracture which lacks normal anatomical integrity or anthropometric proportions.

* A **Custom Fabricated** Orthosis is one which is individually fabricated for a specific beneficiary.

** A **Prefabricated** Orthosis is one which is manufactured in quantity without a specific beneficiary in mind when originally created. This type of orthosis may be trimmed, bent, molded, or otherwise modified for use by a specific beneficiary.

Knee Orthosis

To assure coverage of knee orthoses, Medicare requires one of the following to be documented by the physician:

1. Knee instability must be documented by examination of the patient and objective description of joint laxity (e.g. varus/valgus instability, anterior/posterior Drawer Test).
2. Flexion or extension contractures of the knee with movement on passive range of motion testing of at least 10 degrees.

For Custom Fabricated orthoses, there must be detailed documentation in the treating physician's records to support the medical necessity of a Custom Fabricated rather than a Prefabricated orthosis.

- Physician must document Why a Prefabricated Orthosis Will Not work
- Physical characteristics which require the use of Custom Fabricated vs. Prefabricated orthoses, include, but are not limited to:
 - Deformity of the leg or knee
 - Size of the thigh and calf
 - Minimal muscle mass upon which to suspend an orthosis

Spinal Orthosis

One of the following Medicare justifications must be documented in the patient's medical record for a **spinal orthosis** to be covered:

1. To reduce pain by restricting mobility of the trunk; or
2. To facilitate healing following an injury to the spine or related soft tissues; or
3. To facilitate healing following a surgical procedure on the spine or related soft tissue;
or
4. To otherwise support weak spinal muscles and/or a deformed spine.