

Case Number:	CM14-0190644		
Date Assigned:	11/24/2014	Date of Injury:	10/08/2012
Decision Date:	01/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/14/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in Maryland. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The patient is a 60 year old male with a work injury dated 10/8/12 due to walking through the kitchen at work as a sous chef and slipping on a wet soap water floor and having a backward fall onto his buttocks and left elbow on the floor. The diagnoses include lumbar facet syndrome and lumbar radiculopathy. Under consideration is a request for a lumbar support brace. The patient had x-rays of the lumbar spine as reviewed on 09/18/14 which was found to be normal. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the lumbar spine dated 06/17/14 as reviewed on 09/18/14 showed an L4-L5 facet spurring with left lateral recess and abutment of the left L5 nerve root. It also showed an L5-S1 facet spurring with moderate-severe light and left foraminal stenosis. 5/13/13 EMG/NCS were normal. A 10/21/14 primary treating physician progress report states that the patient has worsening low back pain since returning to work. He tried Tramadol but claims it has no effect on reducing his pain. He takes Naprosyn and Prilosec with some heartburn and Cyclobenzaprine for spasms. On exam there is 4/5 left shoulder abduction, left first toe extension. There is tenderness at left L5 to palpation and in the facet joint area. The treatment plan is stop Naproxen due to reflux and start Celebrex. Hold on narcotics until official urine drug screen. Refill Prilosec and Cyclobenzaprine. He will await authorization for spine injection. There is a request for authorization for a lumbar support brace.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Lumbar Support Brace: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back (updated 10/28/14), Lumbar Supports

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints, Chapter 1 Prevention Page(s): 298, 301, 9.

Decision rationale: Lumbar support brace is not medically necessary per the MTUS ACOEM Guidelines. The guidelines state that lumbar supports have not been shown to have any lasting benefit beyond the acute phase of symptom relief. The MTUS guidelines also state that there is no evidence for the effectiveness of lumbar supports in preventing back pain in industry. Furthermore, the guidelines state that the use of back belts as lumbar support should be avoided because they have been shown to have little or no benefit, thereby providing only a false sense of security. The guidelines state that proper lifting techniques and discussion of general conditioning should be emphasized. The documentation submitted does not reveal extenuating reasons to go against guideline recommendations and therefore the request for lumbar support brace is not medically necessary.