

Case Number:	CM15-0050659		
Date Assigned:	03/24/2015	Date of Injury:	04/16/2007
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/25/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/17/2015

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: Indiana

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 injured worker is a 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/16/2007. The mechanism of injury was not provided for review. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical 4-5 herniated nucleus pulposus, stenosis, lumbalgia, knee pain, hip pain, cervical and lumbar spondylosis and lumbar sprain/strain. Cervical magnetic resonance imaging showed spondylosis in the cervical spine. Treatment to date has included therapy and medication management. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain and stiffness, shoulder pain, knee pain and neck pain. In a progress note dated 2/19/2015, the treating physician is requesting post-operative cervical vista collar for the cervical spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Post-operative cervical vista collar for the cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG); Neck; Cervical Collar.

Decision rationale: MTUS is silent on this, but ODG states, "Not recommended after single-level anterior cervical fusion with plate. The use of a cervical brace does not improve the fusion rate or the clinical outcomes of patients undergoing single-level anterior cervical fusion with plating. Plates limit motion between the graft and the vertebra in anterior cervical fusion. Still, the use of cervical collars after instrumented anterior cervical fusion is widely practiced. This RCT found there was also no statistically significant difference in any of the clinical measures between the Braced and Nonbraced group. The SF-36 Physical Component Summary, NDI, neck, and arm pain scores were similar in both groups at all time intervals and showed statistically significant improvement when compared with preoperative scores. There was no difference in the proportion of patients working at any time point. Independent radiologists reported higher rates of fusion in the Nonbraced group over all time intervals, but those were not statistically significant."Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.