

Case Number:	CM15-0078715		
Date Assigned:	04/29/2015	Date of Injury:	12/20/2010
Decision Date:	05/29/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/24/2015

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: New Jersey

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 28 year old male who sustained an industrial injury to his right knee on 12/20/2010. The injured worker was diagnosed with right knee degenerative joint disease with tricompartmental arthritis; re-rupture of anterior cruciate ligament and lumbar spine sprain/strain. Treatment to date includes diagnostic testing, surgery, knee brace, physical therapy and medications. The injured worker is status post anterior cruciate ligament rupture and repair (no date documented), right knee arthroscopy with partial medial and lateral meniscectomy, synovectomy of 3 compartments, removal of loose body and lateral patellar release on February 4, 2015. According to the primary treating physician's progress report on March 24, 2015, the injured worker was in physical therapy and trying to lose weight at a gym. The injured worker is documented at 6 feet tall, weighs 337 pounds with a body mass index of 45 (Level III). The injured worker is up 7 pounds from the previous visit on February 24, 2014. Examination revealed surgical sites healing well with range of motion reasonably well preserved. Some weakness of the quadriceps musculature was noted with laxity as there is no anterior cruciate ligament due to past rupture. Current medications are listed as Norco. Treatment plan consists of medications with decreasing opiates, physical therapy with home exercise program, custom molded anterior cruciate ligament protective brace and the current request for a weight loss program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Weight loss program, Body part: right knee: 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 ODG, Diabetes, Lifestyle modifications.

Decision rationale: The MTUS is silent regarding weight loss programs. The ODG, however, states that lifestyle modifications such as dietary changes and exercise are particularly recommended as first-line interventions for the treatment of diabetes and obesity. The low-glycemic-index diet is best for weight loss and cardiovascular disease prevention. Extreme restriction of healthy whole food sources of fats or complex carbs can have bad effects, however. The best long-term approach is to avoid restriction of any major nutrient, either fat or carbohydrate, and instead focus on the quality of nutrients from whole foods, primarily plant-based. The argument that the food industry makes, that all foods can be part of a healthful diet as long as you watch calories, is misleading. Primary to considering any weight loss program, an attempt with individualized dietary and exercise advice by the provider should come first. In the case of this worker, losing weight is clearly a priority, and not just for the purpose of treating his knee injury. However, as there are multiple types of weight loss programs and advice, some of which may be harmful, and no details regarding the program to be attended found in the notes available for review, this request will be considered medically unnecessary at this time until this detail is provided for review.