This medical policy is not a guarantee of benefits or coverage, nor should it be deemed as medical advice. In the event of any conflict concerning benefit coverage, the employer/member summary plan document (SPD) supersedes this medical policy.

DEFINITIONS: Strabismus is the medical term for conditions of the eye that cause deviation of one of the eyes when looking at an object. The condition can be constant or intermittent, the latter occurring in times of stress or when ill. Surgery is not recommended for intermittent strabismus. There are several types of strabismus other than constant and intermittent: esotropia (divided into congenital esotropia, infantile esotropia, esotropia with amblyopia, accommodative esotropia, and partially accommodative esotropia), exotropia, intermittent exotropia, hypertropia, and Duane’s syndrome. Congenital esotropia is from birth, is usually of large amount and frequently requires surgery, or multiple surgeries, for correction. It also requires the collaboration of an ophthalmologist and a developmental optometrist to achieve proper fusion. Infantile esotropia develops at 2 to 4 months of age and may also need surgical intervention. Esotropia with amblyopia is best treated by focusing on the amblyopia first, and then on surgical therapy. Accomodative esotropia occurs when focusing on near objects, is usually treated with glasses and is never treated surgically. Partially accommodative esotropia is a combination of basic esotropia and accommodative esotropia, and may sometimes be treated with surgical correction of the basic esotropia.

Extropia is outward deviation of the eye. Most exotropia is intermittent and has a good likelihood of improved vision in the future. Surgery should be a last resort for large-angle exotropia and frequently only has a cosmetic effect.

Hypertropia is upward deviation of the eye and is usually due to superior oblique muscle palsy. It is frequently congenital and does not require surgery unless the patient fails to respond to prismatic glasses and vision therapy. Treatment of newly acquired superior oblique palsies that do not resolve in 6 months may require surgery.

Duane’s syndrome is the inability to move the eye away from the nose when opening the eyes wide, retraction of the eye when looking close or toward the nose, and retraction of the eye. Surgery will not correct the problem.
**INDICATIONS:** Correction of constant strabismus caused by congenital esotropia, infantile esotropia and occasionally for esotropia with amblyopia. Surgery is not indicated for intermittent esotropia, accommodative esotropia or Duane’s syndrome, and only as a last resort for large-angle hypertropia. Newly acquired hypertropia that fails to resolve after 6 months may also require surgery.

**POLICY:** Surgical correction of strabismus is not covered for cosmetic purposes, but will be covered if there is a reasonable expectation of restoration of fusion of vision. Surgical correction is not covered if performed for intermittent esotropia, accommodative esotropia or Duane’s syndrome.

**PROCESS:**

The member or provider must contact:
1. The Customer Service department to verify eligibility/benefits.
2. Medical Management to initiate a pre-authorization.
3. Provide clinical information which supports the medical necessity of the requested service.

**CPT, HCPC CODES:** Informative policy.