

Origination Date: 9/01	Revision Date(s): 9/03, 12/04, 12/05, 12/06, 12/07, 1/09
Developed By: Medical Criteria Committee	

*Csaba Mera MD.*

Approved: Csaba Mera, MD Date: 01/13/09

---

**Description:**

Intradiscal electrothermal therapy (IDET) is a minimally invasive surgical procedure that uses a catheter and flexible electrode to apply heat directly to intervertebral discs to treat lower back pain caused by internal disc disruption. Application of heat in this manner has been shown to cause coagulation of the disc nucleus and annular wall tissues. The goal is shrinkage of the disc material and destruction of the annular nerve receptors with the desired result of decreasing nerve root compression and pain from the offending degenerative discs. It is usually performed as an outpatient procedure under local anesthetic.

**Policy Guidelines:**

1. The physician must be adequately trained in IDET procedure by meeting all of the following requirements:
  - a. Performed at least 100 discograms
  - b. Completed IDET training course
  - c. The first 5 IDET procedures performed under supervision
2. The patient must not have any of the absolute or relative contraindications listed.

**Criteria:**

ODS Health Plans will allow benefits for IDET when the patient meets all of the inclusion criteria below and the procedure is performed by a clinician who meets all of the requirements above:

1. Chronic, intrusive back pain for greater than 3 months
2. Lack of malignancy or infection
3. No medical contraindications
4. No Neurological deficits
5. Normal straight leg raise
6. Nondiagnostic MRI scan
7. No evidence for segmental instability or spondylolisthesis at target level
8. No irreversible psychological barriers to recovery
9. Motivated patient with realistic expectations or outcome
10. No greater than 25% loss of disc height
11. All criteria for internal disc disruption (IDD) satisfied:
  - a. Disc stimulation is positive at low pressure (<50psi)
  - b. Disc stimulation reproduces pain of intensity >6/10
  - c. Disc stimulation reproduces concordant pain
  - d. CT discography reveals a Grade 3 or greater annular tear

**Absolute Contraindications:**

- Patient is unwilling or unable to consent to the procedure
- Patient has evidence for untreated infections in the procedural field or systemically
- Known bleeding diathesis
- Patient is medically or psychologically unstable
- Indeterminate results of disc provocation testing
- Nerve root impingement with primary radicular pain
- Spinal stenosis with neurogenic claudications
- Free fragment disc herniation at target level
- IDET performed within the past 6 months at the target level

Origination Date: 9/01	Revision Date(s): 9/03, 12/04, 12/05, 12/06, 12/07, 1/09
Developed By: Medical Criteria Committee	

- Spondylolisthesis at the target level
- Evidence for mechanical instability at the target level
- Pregnancy

**Relative Contraindications:**

- Immunosuppression
- Patient age below 18 or over 65
- Unrealistic patient or family expectation for treatment result
- Uncooperative patient who is unlikely to tolerate the procedure or comply with postoperative care instructions

**Information to be Submitted with Pre-Authorization Request:**

1. Treating physician records for the past 3 months
2. Discogram
3. MRI

**References:**

- Saal JA, Saal JS. Intradiscal Electrothermal Treatment for Chronic Discogenic Low Back Pain. SPINE Vol 25, No. 20, October 2000
- Hayes Technologies April 2001
- International Spinal Injection Society Practice Guidelines and Protocols Intradiscal Electrothermal Annuloplasty. M Karasek, N Bogduk, R Derby, pending publication 2001.
- Welch W, Gerszten P Alternative strategies for lumbar discectomy: intradiscal electrothermy and nucleoplasty. Neurosurgery Focus 13(2) Article 7, 2002.
- Pauza K, Howell S, Dreyfuss P, et al. A randomized, placebo-controlled trial of intradiscal electrothermal therapy for the treatment of discogenic low back pain. The Spine Journal, Jan-Feb 2004, Vol 4(1):27-35.
- Lee M, Cooper G, Lutz G, et al. Intradiscal electrothermal therapy (IDET) for treatment of chronic lumbar discogenic pain: a minimum 2-year clinical outcome study. Pain Physician. Oct 2003, 443-448.
- Karasek M, Bogduk N. Two-year follow-up of a controlled trial of intradiscal electrothermal anuloplasty for chronic low back pain resulting from internal disc disruption. The Spine Journal, Sep-Oct 2002; Vol 2(5):343-350.
- Andersson GB, Mekhail NA, Block JE. Treatment of intractable discogenic low back pain. A systematic review of spinal fusion and intradiscal electrothermal therapy (IDET). Pain Physician. 2006 Jul;9(3):237-48.
- Appleby D, Andersson G, Totta M. Meta-analysis of the efficacy and safety of intradiscal electrothermal therapy (IDET). Pain Med. 2006 Jul-Aug;7(4):308-16.
- Barna S, Thiyagarajah A, Santiago-Palma J, et al. Intradiscal electrothermal therapy. Emedicine. February 27, 2007. Available at URL address: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1145641-print>. Accessed on January 12, 2009.
- Physician Advisors