This Coverage Determination Guideline provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the member specific benefit plan document must be referenced. The terms of the member specific benefit plan document [e.g., Certificate of Coverage (COC), Schedule of Benefits (SOB), and/or Summary Plan Description (SPD)] may differ greatly from the standard benefit plan upon which this Coverage Determination Guideline is based. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document supersedes this Coverage Determination Guideline. All reviewers must first identify member eligibility, any federal or state regulatory requirements, and the member specific benefit plan coverage prior to use of this Coverage Determination Guideline. Other Policies and Coverage Determination Guidelines may apply. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Coverage Determination Guideline is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

UnitedHealthcare may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the MCG™ Care Guidelines, to assist us in administering health benefits. The MCG™ Care Guidelines are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.

Before using this guideline, please check the member specific benefit plan document and any federal or state mandates, if applicable.

For self-funded plans with SPD language other than fully-insured Generic COC language, please refer to the member specific benefit plan document for coverage.

**Essential Health Benefits for Individual and Small Group**

For plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2014, the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) requires fully insured non-grandfathered individual and small group plans (inside and outside of Exchanges) to provide coverage for ten categories of Essential Health Benefits (“EHBs”). Large group plans (both self-funded and fully insured), and small group ASO plans, are not subject to the requirement to offer coverage for EHBs. However, if such plans choose to provide coverage for benefits which are deemed EHBs, the ACA requires all dollar limits on those benefits to be removed on all Grandfathered and Non-Grandfathered plans. The determination of which benefits constitute EHBs is made on a state by state basis. As such, when using this guideline, it is important to refer to the member specific benefit plan document to determine benefit coverage.
**COVERAGE RATIONALE**

**Indications for Coverage**
Some states require benefit coverage for services that UnitedHealthcare considers cosmetic procedures, such as repair of external congenital anomalies in the absence of a functional impairment. Please refer to the member specific benefit plan document.

**Criteria for a Coverage Determination that Surgery is Reconstructive and Medically Necessary**
The following must be available when requested by UnitedHealthcare:
- Best corrected visual acuity in both eyes, all patients (except pediatrics)
- Eye exam (chief complaint, HPI)
- Clear color photographs (eye level, frontal with patient looking straight ahead, light reflex visible and centered)
- Peripheral or superior visual fields automated, reliable (refer to the Definitions section), un-taped/taped are preferable. Note the following:
  - In situations where computerized visual field testing is not available, we will accept manual visual field testing.
  - In situations where visual field testing is not possible, see section below: "When Patient is Not Capable of Visual Field Testing."

**Note:** The visual fields and color photographs must be consistent.

If multiple procedures are requested, the following criteria must be met:
- All criteria for each individual procedure must be met; and
- Visual field testing shows visual impairment which can’t be addressed by one procedure alone; and
- Color photograph findings are consistent with visual field findings.

**Upper eyelid blepharoplasty (CPT 15822 and 15823) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when the following criteria are present:**
- Ptosis has been ruled out as the primary cause of visual field obstruction; and
- Clear color photographs must show that the extra skin is the primary cause of visual field obstruction. The extra skin, but not the lid margin, is elevated to show it reverses the visual field obstruction; and lateral hooding (if present) resolves; and
- The patient must have a Functional/Physical Impairment complaint directly related to an abnormality of the eyelid(s); and
- Excess skin (dermatochalasis/blepharochalasis) touches the lashes; and
- Automated peripheral or superior visual field testing, with the eyelid skin taped and un-taped, showing improvement of 30% or more.
  - In situations where computerized visual field testing is not available, we will accept manual visual field testing.
  - In situations where visual field testing is not possible, see section below: "When Patient is Not Capable of Visual Field Testing."

**Note:** Extended blepharoplasty may be indicated for blepharospasm (eyelids are forced shut) when the following two criteria are met:
- Debilitating symptoms (e.g., pain); and
- Conservative treatment has been tried and failed, or is contraindicated (e.g., Botox®).

**Upper eyelid blepharoptosis repair (CPT 67901–67909) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when the following criteria are present:**
- The patient must have a Functional/Physical Impairment complaint directly related to the position of the eyelid(s); and
- Other treatable causes of ptosis are ruled out (e.g., recent Botox® injections, myasthenia gravis when applicable); and
- Eyelid droop (upper eyelid ptosis) and an MRD-1 of 2.0 mm or less; and
- The MRD is documented in clear color photographs with patient looking straight ahead and light reflex centered on the pupil; and
- Automated peripheral or superior visual field testing, with the eyelids taped and un-taped, showing improvement of 30% or more improvement in the number of points seen.
  - In situations where computerized visual field testing is not available, we will accept manual visual field testing.
  - In situations where visual field testing is not possible, see section below: "When Patient is Not Capable of Visual Field Testing."

**Note:** For children under age 10 years, ptosis repair is covered to prevent amblyopia. Visual field testing is not required, but color photographs are required.
Brow ptosis (CPT 67900) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when the following criteria are present:

- Other causes have been eliminated as the primary cause for the visual field obstruction (e.g., Botox® treatments within the past six (6) months); and
- Patient must have a functional complaint related to brow ptosis. Brow ptosis must be documented in two color photographs. One showing the eyebrow below the bony superior orbital rim, and a second photograph with the brow elevated that eliminates the visual field defect; and
  - Automated peripheral and superior visual field testing, with differential taping (eyebrow and eyebrow + eyelid) showing 30% or more improvement in total number of points seen with the eyebrow taped up. In situations where computerized visual field testing is not available, we will accept manual visual field testing.
  - In situations where visual field testing is not possible, see section below: "When Patient is Not Capable of Visual Field Testing."
- Documentation indicating the specific brow lift procedure (e.g., supra-ciliary, mid forehead or coronal, pretrichial, direct brow lift vs browpexy, internal brow lift).

**Note:** For Browpexy/internal brow lift, see Coverage Limitations and Exclusions.

Eyelid surgery with an anophthalmic socket (has no eyeball) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when both of the following criteria are present:

- Patient has an anophthalmic condition; and
- Patient is experiencing difficulties fitting or wearing an ocular prosthesis.

Lower eyelid blepharoplasty (CPT 15820 and 15821) is usually cosmetic, however, is considered reconstructive and medically necessary only when all of the following criteria are present:

- There is documented facial nerve damage; and
- Clear color photographs document the pathology; and
- Patient is unable to close the eye due to the lower lid dysfunction; and
- Functional impairment including both of the following:
  - Documented uncontrolled tearing or irritation; and
  - Conservative treatments tried and failed.

Ectropion (eyelid turned outward) (CPT 67914 through 67917) or punctal eversion is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following criteria are present:

- Clear color photographs document the pathology; and
- Corneal or conjunctival injury with both of the following criteria:
  - Subjective symptoms include either:
    - Pain or discomfort; or
    - Excess tearing; and
  - Any one of the following:
    - Exposure keratitis; and/or
    - Keratoconjunctivitis; and/or
    - Corneal ulcer

Entropion (eyelid turned inward) (CPT 67921–67924) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following criteria are present:

- Clear color photographs must document the following:
  - Lid turned inward; and
  - At least one of the following:
    - Trichiasis; or
    - Irritation of cornea or conjunctiva; and
  - Subjective symptoms including either of the following:
    - Excessive tearing; or
    - Pain or discomfort

Lid retraction surgery (CPT 67911) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following criteria are present:

- Other causes have been eliminated as the reason for the lid retraction such as use of dilating eye drops, glaucoma medications; and
- Clear color photographs document the pathology; and
- There is functional impairment (such as ‘dry eyes’, pain/discomfort, tearing, blurred vision); and
- Tried and failed conservative treatments; and
- In cases of thyroid eye disease two or more Hertel measurements at least 6 months apart with the same base measurements are unchanged.
Canthoplasty/canthopexy (CPT 21280, 21282, 67950, 67961, 67966) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following criteria are present:

- Functional impairment; and
- Clear color photographs document the pathology; and
- Repair of ectropion or entropion will not correct condition; and
- At least one of the following patient complaints is present:
  - Epiphora (excess tearing) not resolved by conservative measures; or
  - Corneal dryness unresponsive to lubricants; or
  - Corneal ulcer.

Repair of floppy eyelid syndrome (FES) (CPT 67961 and 67966) is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when all of the following are present when documented and confirmed by history and examination:

- Subjective symptoms must include eyelids spontaneously "flipping over" when they sleep due to rubbing on the pillow, AND one of the following:
  - Eye pain or discomfort; or
  - Excess tearing; or
  - Eye irritation, ocular redness and discharge
- Physical Examination that documents the following:
  - Eyelash Ptosis; and
  - Significant upper eyelid laxity; and
  - Presence of Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis; or
  - Corneal findings such as:
    - Superficial Punctate Erosions (SPK); or
    - Corneal abrasion (documentation of a history of corneal abrasion or recurrent erosion syndrome is considered sufficient); or
    - Microbial Keratitis
- Clear color photographs that clearly document floppy eyelid syndrome and demonstrate both of the following:
  - Lids must be everted in the photographs; and
  - Conjunctival surface (underbelly) of the lids must clearly demonstrate Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis
- Documentation that conservative treatment has been tried and failed, examples may include:
  - Ocular lubricants both drops (daytime) and ointments (bedtime); or
  - Short trial of antihistamines; or
  - Topical steroid drops; or
  - Eye Shield and/or Taping the lids at bedtime
- Other causes of the eye findings have been ruled out, examples may include:
  - Allergic conjunctivitis
  - Atopic keratoconjunctivitis
  - Blepharitis
  - Contact lens (CL) complication
  - Dermatochalasis
  - Ectropion
  - GPC (giant papillary conjunctivitis) that is not related to FES
  - Ptosis of the lid(s)
  - Superior limbic keratoconjunctivitis (SLK)

**When Patient Is Not Capable of Visual Field Testing**

Visual field testing is not required when the patient is not capable of performing a visual field test. The following are some examples:

- If the patient is a child 12 years old or under
- If the patient has intellectual disabilities (previously known as mental retardation) or some other severe neurologic disease

**Coverage Limitations and Exclusions**

Some states require benefit coverage for services that UnitedHealthcare considers cosmetic procedures, such as repair of external congenital anomalies in the absence of a functional impairment. Please refer to the member specific benefit plan document.

Cosmetic Procedures are excluded from coverage:

- Procedures that correct an anatomical Congenital Anomaly without improving or restoring physiologic function are considered Cosmetic Procedures. The fact that a Covered Person may suffer psychological consequences or
socially avoidant behavior as a result of an Injury, Sickness or Congenital Anomaly does not classify surgery (or other procedures done to relieve such consequences or behavior) as a reconstructive procedure.

- Any procedure that does not meet the reconstructive criteria above in the Indications for Coverage section.
- Browpexy/internal brow lift is not designed to improve function. It is considered a cosmetic procedure and is not a covered service.

**DEFINITIONS**

When applicable, please refer to the member specific benefit plan document for definitions.

**Congenital Anomaly**: A physical developmental defect that is present at the time of birth, and that is identified within the first twelve months of birth. (2011 Generic COC)

**Congenital Anomaly (California only)**: A physical developmental defect that is present at birth.

**Cosmetic Procedures**: Procedures or services that change or improve appearance without significantly improving physiological function, as determined by UHC. (2011 Generic COC)

**Cosmetic Procedures (California only)**: Procedures or services are performed to alter or reshape normal structures of the body in order to improve the Covered Person's appearance.

**Floppy Eyelid Syndrome (FES)**: Characterized by significant upper eyelid laxity and chronic papillary conjunctivitis in upper palpebral conjunctiva that is poorly respondent to topical lubrication and steroids. FES is known to be associated with obesity, obstructive sleep apnea, Down syndrome, and keratoconus. Keratoconus can be linked to frequent rubbing and mechanical effect on the palpebral conjunctiva and cornea.

**Functional/Physical Impairment**: A physical/functional or physiological impairment causes deviation from the normal function of a tissue or organ. This results in a significantly limited, impaired, or delayed capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions.

**Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis**: Is defined by exam findings of giant papillary hypertrophy primarily affecting the upper tarsal conjunctiva.

**Margin Reflex Distance -1 (MRD-1)**: Measures the number of millimeters from the corneal light reflex or center of the pupil to the upper lid margin. (Note: the “-1” in MRD-1 refers to the upper lid and not the measurement in millimeters.)

**Marginal Reflex Distance -2 (MRD-2)**: Measures the number of millimeters from the corneal light reflex or center of the pupil to the lower lid margin. (Note: the “-2” in MRD-2 refers to the lower lid and not the measurement in millimeters.)

**Reconstructive Procedures**: Reconstructive procedures when the primary purpose of the procedure is either to treat a medical condition or to improve or restore physiologic function. Reconstructive procedures include surgery or other procedures which are associated with an Injury, Sickness or Congenital Anomaly. The primary result of the procedure is not a changed or improved physical appearance.

Procedures that correct an anatomical Congenital Anomaly without improving or restoring physiologic function are considered Cosmetic Procedures. The fact that a Covered Person may suffer psychological consequences or socially avoidant behavior as a result of an Injury, Sickness or Congenital Anomaly does not classify surgery (or other procedures done to relieve such consequences or behavior) as a reconstructive procedure. (2011 Generic COC)

**Reconstructive Procedures (California only)**: Reconstructive procedures to correct or repair abnormal structures of the body caused by congenital defects, developmental abnormalities, trauma, infection, tumors, or disease. Reconstructive procedures include surgery or other procedures which are associated with an Injury, Sickness or Congenital Anomaly. The primary result of the procedure is not a changed or improved physical appearance for cosmetic purposes only, but rather to improve function and/or to create a normal appearance, to the extent possible.

**Reliability (Visual Fields)**: Fixation loss is less than or equal to 33%.
### APPLICABLE CODES

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this guideline does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Coverage Determination Guidelines may apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blepharoplasty (Lower Eyelid)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15820</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty, lower eyelid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15821</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty, lower eyelid; with extensive herniated fat pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blepharoplasty (Upper Eyelid)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15822</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty, upper eyelid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15823</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty, upper eyelid; with excessive skin weighting down lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brow Ptosis Repair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67900</td>
<td>Repair of brow ptosis (supraciliary, mid-forehead or coronal approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper Eyelid Blepharoptosis Repair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67901</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; frontalis muscle technique with suture or other material (e.g., banked fascia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67902</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; frontalis muscle technique with autologous fascial sling (includes obtaining fascia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67903</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; (tarso) levator resection or advancement, internal approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67904</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; (tarso) levator resection or advancement, external approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67906</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; superior rectus technique with fascial sling (includes obtaining fascia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67908</td>
<td>Repair of blepharoptosis; conjunctivo-tarso-Muller’s muscle-levator resection (e.g., Fasanella-Servat type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67909</td>
<td>Reduction of overcorrection of ptosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lid Retraction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67911</td>
<td>Correction of lid retraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ectropion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67914</td>
<td>Repair of ectropion; suture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67915</td>
<td>Repair of ectropion; thermocauterization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67916</td>
<td>Repair of ectropion; excision tarsal wedge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67917</td>
<td>Repair of ectropion; extensive (e.g., tarsal strip operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entropion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67921</td>
<td>Repair of entropion; suture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67922</td>
<td>Repair of entropion; thermocauterization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67923</td>
<td>Repair of entropion; excision tarsal wedge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67924</td>
<td>Repair of entropion; extensive (e.g., tarsal strip or capsulopalpebral fascia repairs operation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canthus Repair and Lid Repair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21280</td>
<td>Medial canthopexy (separate procedure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21282</td>
<td>Lateral canthopexy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67950</td>
<td>Canthoplasty (reconstruction of canthus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67961</td>
<td>Excision and repair of eyelid, involving lid margin, tarsus, conjunctiva, canthus, or full thickness, may include preparation for skin graft or pedicle flap with adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement; up to one-fourth of lid margin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CPT Code Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canthus Repair and Lid Repair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67966</td>
<td>Excision and repair of eyelid, involving lid margin, tarsus, conjunctiva, canthus, or full thickness, may include preparation for skin graft or pedicle flap with adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement; over one-fourth of lid margin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floppy Eyelid Syndrome</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67961</td>
<td>Excision and repair of eyelid, involving lid margin, tarsus, conjunctiva, canthus, or full thickness, may include preparation for skin graft or pedicle flap with adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement; up to one-fourth of lid margin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67966</td>
<td>Excision and repair of eyelid, involving lid margin, tarsus, conjunctiva, canthus, or full thickness, may include preparation for skin graft or pedicle flap with adjacent tissue transfer or rearrangement; over one-fourth of lid margin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*CPT® is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association*

---

### REFERENCES


---

### GUIDELINE HISTORY/REVISION INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 06/01/2017 | - Revised coverage rationale:  
  - Replaced references to "color photographs“ with "clear color photographs"  
  - Updated coverage criteria for upper eyelid blepharoplasty; replaced language indicating:  
    - "The color photograph must show the extra skin, but not the lid margin, taped up to show it reverses the visual field obstruction, and/or lateral hooding present" with "clear color photographs must show that the extra skin is the primary cause of visual field obstruction; the extra skin, but not the lid margin, is elevated to show it reverses the visual field obstruction, and lateral hooding (if present) resolves"  
    - "Automated peripheral or superior visual field testing, with the eyelids taped and un-taped, showing improvement of 30% or more in number of points seen [is required]“ with "automated peripheral or superior visual field testing, with the eyelid skin taped and un-taped, showing improvement of 30% or more [is required]" |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Updated coverage criteria for <strong>upper eyelid blepharoptosis repair</strong>; replaced language indicating &quot;upper eyelid blepharoptosis repair is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when other causes of ptosis are ruled out&quot; with &quot;upper eyelid blepharoptosis repair is considered reconstructive and medically necessary when other <em>treatable</em> causes of ptosis are ruled out&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      | o Updated coverage criteria for **brow ptosis**:  
  ▪ Replaced language indicating “a second photograph [is required] with the brow *taped up* that eliminates the visual field defect” with “a second photograph [is required] with the brow *elevated* that eliminates the visual field defect”  
  ▪ Revised list of examples of brow lift procedures to include supra-ciliary, mid-forehead, coronal, or pretrichial direct brow lift vs. browpexy or internal brow lift |
|      | o Updated coverage criteria for **entropion (eyelid turned inward)**; removed criterion requiring “conservative treatments have been tried and failed” |
|      | o Updated coverage criteria for **canthoplasty/canthopexy**:  
  ▪ Removed criterion requiring “conservative treatments have been tried and failed”  
  ▪ Replaced criterion requiring “simple repair of ectropion or entropion will not correct condition” with “repair of ectropion or entropion will not correct condition” |
|      | o Updated coverage criteria for **repair of floppy eyelid syndrome (FES)**; replaced criterion requiring "color photos that clearly document floppy eyelid syndrome; the photographs must clearly demonstrate both of the [listed criteria]" with “clear color photographs that clearly document floppy eyelid syndrome and demonstrate both of the [listed criteria]”  
  • Archived previous policy version CDG.002.10 |