

# Excessive Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Removal



Medicaid Medical Coverage Policy

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### Disclaimer

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## Description

The removal of excessive skin and subcutaneous (directly beneath the skin) tissue includes a range of body contouring procedures performed after major weight loss to address excess skin folds on the arms, buttocks, thighs and torso. The goals of skin removal surgery are to improve the overall contour and shape of the body, particularly in areas where excess skin has caused sagging or drooping and eliminate the cause of chafing or skin infections. The procedures often include lipectomy (fat removal) by excision or suction.

Examples include, but may not be limited to:

- **Arm lift (brachioplasty)** – removal of excess skin from the upper arm
- **Back lift/bra line lift** – removal of excess skin from the upper back
- **Lower body lift (circumferential body lift)** – removal of excess skin from the front and back of the torso (the circumference of the body)
- **Thigh and buttock lift** - removal of excess skin from the buttocks and thighs

**Prior authorization is required for the services covered in this clinical coverage policy.**

## Coverage Determination

Humana members may be eligible under the Plan for **excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue removal** when the following criteria are met:

- Excess skin and tissue is causing a [functional impairment](#); **AND**
- Medical complications due to excess tissue and skin folds (eg, candidiasis, intertrigo, tissue necrosis) not relieved or controlled by at least 12 consecutive weeks of prescribed oral and/or topical dermatological therapy (eg, antibiotics, antifungals, corticosteroids) or other prescribed treatment if medically appropriate and not contraindicated; **AND**
- Stable body weight has been maintained for at least 6 months after weight loss has reached plateau

\*Functional impairment is defined as a direct and measurable reduction in physical performance of an organ or body part.

## Coverage Limitations

*For members under age 21, requests are reviewed for medical necessity in accordance with Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) requirements.*

Humana members may **NOT** be eligible under the Plan for **excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue removal** when the above criteria are not met, to improve appearance, or for any other indications. This is considered cosmetic.

## Coding Information

Any codes listed on this policy are for informational purposes only. Do not rely on the accuracy and inclusion of specific codes. Inclusion of a code does not guarantee coverage and/or reimbursement for a service or procedure. The following codes require prior authorization for Humana Healthy Horizons in Kentucky.

CPT® Code(s)	Description	Comments
15832	Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); thigh	
15834	Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); hip	

15835	Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); buttock	
15836	Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); arm	
15839	Excision, excessive skin and subcutaneous tissue (includes lipectomy); other area	
CPT® Category III Code(s)	Description	Comments
No code(s) identified		
HCPCS Code(s)	Description	Comments
No code(s) identified		

## References

1. American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). Guiding Principles (ARCHIVED). Fat transfer/fat graft and fat injection. <https://plasticsurgery.org>. Published January 2009.
2. American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). Practice Parameter. Practice parameter for surgical treatment of skin redundancy for obese and massive weight loss patients. <https://plasticsurgery.org>. Published July 2017.
3. ClinicalKey. Neligan PC, Buck DW. Body Contouring. In: Neligan PC, Buck DW. *Core Procedures in Plastic Surgery*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Elsevier;2020:106-138. <https://clinicalkey.com>.
4. Haeck PC, Swanson JA, Gutowski KA, et al. Evidence-based patient safety advisory: liposuction. *Plast Reconstr Surg*. 2009;124(4s):28s-44s.

## Change Summary

11/04/2025 New Policy.