

## Dry Needling, Medical 173

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Coverage Policy Medical 173  
Version 3

**Member-specific benefits take precedence over medical policy and benefits may vary across plans. Refer to the individual's benefit plan for details [\\*](#).**

### Purpose:

This policy addresses the medical necessity of Dry Needling.

### Description & Definitions:

Dry needling uses small dry (does not inject liquid) needles that are inserted into trigger points through the skin that are in either muscle or tissue. This treatment can be used for muscle pain and dysfunction.

**\*\*Note:** Dry Needling is not to be confused with acupuncture which is a healing technique that uses needles that are inserted into points (not necessarily trigger points) along meridian lines that represent different organs. Dry needling uses medical evidence-based guideline recommendations while acupuncture is used to alter a person's energy flow using ancient Chinese medicine practices.

### Criteria:

Dry Needling is considered not medically necessary for any indication.

### Coding:

Medically necessary with criteria:

Coding	Description
	None

Considered Not Medically Necessary:

Coding	Description
20560	Needle insertion(s) without injection(s); 1 or 2 muscle(s).
20561	Needle insertion(s) without injection(s); 3 or more muscles.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - approved only products only.

## Document History:

Revised Dates:

- 2023: July

Reviewed Dates:

- 2024: April
- 2022: May
- 2021: May

Effective Date:

- June 2020

## References:

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### Special Notes: \*

Medical policies can be highly technical and complex and are provided here for informational purposes. These medical policies are intended for use by health care professionals. The medical policies do not constitute medical advice or medical care. Treating health care professionals are solely responsible for diagnosis, treatment, and medical advice. Sentara Health Plan members should discuss the information in the medical policies with their treating health care professionals. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and these medical policies are subject to change without notice, although Sentara Health Plan will notify providers as required in advance of changes that could have a negative impact on benefits.

Services mean both medical and behavioral health (mental health) services and supplies unless We specifically tell You otherwise. We do not cover any services that are not listed in the Covered Services section unless required to be covered under state or federal laws and regulations. We do not cover any services that are not Medically Necessary. We sometimes give examples of specific services that are not covered but that does not mean that other similar services are covered. Some services are covered only if We authorize them. When We say You or Your We mean You and any of Your family members covered under the Plan. Call Member Services if You have questions.

### Keywords:

SHP Dry Needling, SHP Medical 173, trigger points, muscle pain

