

Evidence Discussion [CMM-312 Knee Surgery-Arthroscopic and Open Procedures: Arthroscopic Debridement (Chondroplasty)/Loose Body/Foreign Body Removal Arthroscopic Debridement (Chondroplasty) and Loose Body/Foreign Body Removal Indications]

Risks of knee arthroscopy for arthroscopic debridement (chondroplasty)/loose body or foreign body removal include but are not limited to failure to improve, iatrogenic articular cartilage damage, neurovascular injury, infection, ecchymosis, hemarthrosis, arthrofibrosis, deep venous thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, and death, as well as complications related to risks of general and local anesthesia. **1**

Given the potential possibility for significant complications, proper patient selection is crucial to minimize the risk-benefit ratio.

Symptoms may include pain as well as recurrent effusions, mechanical symptoms such as blocked range of motion, weakness/giving way or buckling of the knee, or painful locking/clicking/catching/popping during weight-bearing activities. Supportive exam findings include joint effusion, joint line tenderness, painful range of motion or crepitus.

2

Imaging should confirm findings on MRI/ CT arthrogram amenable to arthroscopic debridement or removal, including loose body or foreign body within the joint, or unstable flaps of articular cartilage.

Because patients with Kellgren-Lawrence Grade II or greater x-ray findings have historically received negligible benefit with chondroplasty **3**, arthroscopic debridement (chondroplasty) and loose body removal is considered not medically necessary in those circumstances except for loose body removal in the presence of an acutely locked knee on physical examination. **4**

Benefits of arthroscopic chondroplasty /loose body /foreign body removal may include reduction in mechanical symptoms and pain, with increased ability to return to sports and activities, although it does not restore normal cartilage. **5**

It has been shown that many patients may improve with a course of conservative care and this may very well obviate the need for surgical treatment. **6** As risk for major complications exists, symptoms, physical exam findings and imaging findings should support surgical intervention. Although the use of any coverage criteria includes the possible risk of delayed care, EviCore firmly believes the benefits of our evidence-

based criteria best ensure patient safety and highly outweigh any clinical harms.

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