

2025 Computed Tomography Angiography/Venography (CTA/ CTV) Abdomen

Diagnostic Imaging

CTA-Abdomen-HH
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Pediatric Considerations for Computed Tomography

While computed tomography (CT) is used in children, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or ultrasound is preferred for initial evaluation to minimize radiation exposure. CT is reserved for complex cases where detailed imaging is required. By integrating ultrasound and adhering to these guidelines, healthcare providers can optimize diagnostic accuracy while minimizing risks associated with radiation.

Recommendations for CT imaging include **ALL** of the following:

1. Ultrasound first: Utilize ultrasound as the initial modality where appropriate.
2. CT for complex cases: Reserve CT for when ultrasound or MRI is inadequate.
3. Adhere to guidelines: Follow established protocols to ensure safety and efficacy.
4. Minimize radiation exposure: Especially important for children, young adults and pregnant women.

Computed Tomography Angiography/Venography (CTA/CTV) Abdomen

CTA Abdomen National Coverage Determination (NCD)/Local Coverage Determination (LCD)

Please refer to <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/search.aspx> if applicable to the individual's health plan membership.

Type/ID Number	Title
NCD 220.1	Computed Tomography

Clinical Judgment

These medical policies are designed to provide clinical guidance and do not supplant a provider's independent professional judgment. Physicians retain full and independent authority to determine appropriate care based on each patient's individual clinical circumstances. Although services may be subject to documentation requirements, medical necessity review, or coverage limitations, nothing in this policy is intended to restrict or interfere with a physician's independent medical judgment.

CTA General Contraindications

Computed tomography angiography (CTA) is contraindicated for **ANY** of the following:

- Clinical instability (eg, respiratory distress, severe hypotension, unstable arrhythmias)
References: [2] [5]
- Contrast allergy
References: [2] [5]
- Renal impairment (glomerular filtration rate [GFR] is less than 30 ml/min/1.73 m².)
References: [2] [5]
- **CANNOT** follow procedure directions (eg, holding breath, **NOT** moving)
References: [2] [5]

Preamble: Pediatric Diagnostic Imaging

HealthHelp's clinical guidelines for the Diagnostic Imaging program, are intended to apply to both adults and pediatrics (21 years of age or younger), unless otherwise specified within the criteria.

CTA/CTV Abdomen Guideline

Computed tomography angiography (CTA) or computerized tomography venography (CTV) of the abdomen is considered medically appropriate when the documentation demonstrates **ANY** of the following:

1. Arterial disease is suspected or known with **ANY** of the following:
 - a. Abdominal arterial abnormality (eg, arteriovenous malformations [AVM], compression syndromes, dissection, fistulas, intramural hematoma, vasculitis), limited to the abdomen, for evaluation **AND** ultrasound is non-diagnostic or indeterminate.
 - b. Aneurysm of the abdominal aorta is suspected or known, ultrasound is non-diagnostic or indeterminate and **ANY** of the following:
 - i. Aneurysm is known and complications are suspected.
 - ii. Aneurysm is suspected and symptomatic (eg, abdominal or back pain, hypertension).
 - iii. Aortic aneurysm surveillance for **ANY** of the following:
 - A. 2.5 cm to 2.9 cm; follow-up every 10 years
 - B. 3.0 cm to 3.9 cm; follow-up every 3 years
 - C. 4.0 cm to 4.9 cm; follow-up annually
 - D. 5.0 cm or more; follow-up every 6 months
 - c. Large vessel disease (iliac arteries/veins, mesenteric, renal, splenic, vena cava) is known (eg, aneurysm, dissection, fistulas).

- d. Stenosis, renal artery, or resistant hypertension is suspected or known, renal function is normal, ultrasound is non-diagnostic or indeterminate and **ANY** of the following:
 - i. Abdominal bruit is auscultated.
 - ii. Age is under 30 years old, **NO** family history of hypertension **AND** fibromuscular dysplasia or vasculitis is suspected.
 - iii. Atherosclerotic vascular disease is known, especially in heavy smoker.
 - iv. Congestive heart failure is sudden and recurrent.
 - v. Creatinine elevation is acute, **AFTER** initiation of angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor (ACE inhibitor) or angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB).
 - vi. Hypertension and **EITHER** of the following:
 - A. Malignant or difficult to control and unilateral, small kidney is demonstrated on prior imaging.
 - B. New, difficult to control or labile **AND** age is more than 55 years.
 - vii. Renal failure is of unknown etiology **AND** urine sediment is normal and urinary protein is less than 1 gram per day.
 - viii. Treatment is **NOT** responsive after 3 or more anti-hypertensive medications (including 1 diuretic), at optimal dosing.
 - ix. Vascular disease, high-risk (eg, neurofibromatosis, tuberous sclerosis, William's syndrome) is known.

References: [11] [17] [4] [8] [19] [7] [9] [6] [14] [20] [1] [12] [15]

- 2. Post-surgical assessments for evaluation of complications or disease recurrence.

References: [11]

- 3. Tumor-related vascular invasion or displacement is demonstrated on prior imaging.

References: [11] [15]

- 4. Vascular disease is suspected or known and **ANY** of the following:

- a. Ischemia, localized to the abdomen, is suspected or known.
- b. Upper gastrointestinal bleeding, when endoscopy is abnormal, non-diagnostic or indeterminate.

References: [11] [13] [21] [10] [18]

- 5. Venous thrombosis limited to the abdomen, is suspected **AND** prior imaging is non-diagnostic or indeterminate.

References: [11] [3] [16]

CTA/CTV Abdomen Summary of Changes

CTA/CTV Abdomen guideline had the following version changes from 2024 to 2025:

- Added the following to keep in line with current evidence:
 - "Aneurysm is suspected and symptomatic (eg, abdominal or back pain, hypertension)." new indication per ACR
 - "Aneurysm is known and complications are suspected." per ACR
 - "Glomerular filtration rate" to "Renal impairment" under Contraindications
 - "Post-surgical assessments for evaluation of complications or disease recurrence." to replace prior peri-procedural indication
 - Under "Stenosis"
 - "Congestive heart failure is sudden and recurrent." to replace "Flash pulmonary edema" indication
 - "Renal failure is of unknown etiology **AND** urine sediment is normal and urinary protein is less than 1 gram per day." new indication per EBM
- Removed the following as current evidence no longer supports the indication:
 - Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is suspected or known" as it is too broad and was replaced with 2 new criteria above
 - "Anatomy that is complex is known." as it is too broad
 - Combination studies as they are redundant
 - LCD 33959 as it is not associated with CTA Abdomen codes.
 - "Prior CTA/CTV abdomen is non-diagnostic or indeterminate." as it is too broad
 - "Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) is visualized on prior imaging" as it is redundant with "Abdominal arterial abnormality"
 - Under "Stenosis"
 - "Age is under 35 years old." as it was replaced with Age is under 30 years old"
 - "Blood pressure (BP) has an acute elevation when previous blood pressures are stable." as it falls under "Hypertension evaluation"
 - "Flash pulmonary edema, with unknown etiology." as it was replaced with "Congestive heart failure is sudden and recurrent."
 - "Venous disease" and made "Venous thrombosis limited to the abdomen, is suspected **AND** prior imaging is non-diagnostic or indeterminate" it's own indication.

CTA/CTV Abdomen APC Codes

Table 1. CTA Abdomen APC codes

Codes	Description
74175	Computed tomographic angiography, abdomen, with contrast material(s), including noncontrast images, if performed, and image postprocessing

CTA Abdomen Definitions

Aneurysm refers to weakness in an artery wall, allowing it to abnormally balloon out or widen.

Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors are medications that block the conversion of angiotensin I to angiotensin II, leading to decreased blood pressure and reduced sodium and water retention.

Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) is a medication that selectively blocks the binding of angiotensin II to the angiotensin II type 1 (AT1) receptor, primarily found in vascular smooth muscle and the adrenal gland, thereby reducing vasoconstriction and aldosterone secretion, which lowers blood pressure and decreases systemic vascular resistance without significantly affecting heart rate.

Ankle-brachial index (ABI) is a measure of the difference in the systolic blood pressure of the arm and ankle calculated by dividing the blood pressure of the ankle by that of the arm. It is a noninvasive diagnostic test that measures the ratio of the systolic blood pressure at the ankle to the systolic blood pressure at the brachial artery to assess for peripheral artery disease (PAD).

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) is a condition involving the buildup of fibrofatty plaques within arterial walls, leading to significant narrowing and disruption of blood flow, which can result in acute coronary syndrome, myocardial infarction, angina, stroke, transient ischemic attack, peripheral artery disease, and aortic aneurysm, all of atherosclerotic origin.

Arteriovenous malformation (AVM) are congenital high-flow vascular malformations characterized by abnormal shunting of blood from high-flow feeding arteries to low-resistance veins via a cluster of aberrant blood vessels termed a central nidus, bypassing the normal capillary bed.

Bruit is a sound heard over an artery or vascular channel, indicating turbulent blood flow, often due to an abnormal narrowing of the vessel.

Claudication is a condition in which cramping pain in the leg is induced by exercise, typically caused by obstruction of the arteries.

Computed tomography angiography (CTA) is a medical test that combines a computed tomography (CT) scan with an injection of a special dye to produce pictures of blood vessels and tissues in a part of the body.

Computed tomography venography (CTV) is a technique targeted to assess venous anatomy, determine venous patency and delineate collateral circulation, often using contrast material.

Congestive heart failure (CHF) is a clinical syndrome characterized by structural or functional impairment of ventricular filling or ejection of blood, leading to insufficient perfusion to meet metabolic demands, and is clinically manifested as edema, dyspnea, and fatigue.

Creatinine is a waste product that comes from the digestion of protein in food and the normal breakdown of muscle tissue. It is removed from the blood through the kidneys.

Critical limb ischemia is defined as the presence of ischemic rest pain, nonhealing wounds or ulcers, or gangrene for more than 2 weeks, with associated evidence of hypoperfusion.

Dissection refers to the separation of the layers within the wall of an artery, most commonly the aorta, due to a tear in the intimal layer, leading to the formation of a false lumen.

Diuretic is a drug that makes the kidneys produce more urine. Diuretics, also known as water pills, help the body get rid of extra fluid and salt. They are used to treat high blood pressure, edema, heart failure and other conditions.

Edema is an abnormal infiltration and excess accumulation of serous fluid in connective tissue or in a serous cavity.

Ehlers-Danlos syndrome is a group of hereditary connective tissue disorders that manifests clinically with skin hyperelasticity, hypermobility of joints, atrophic scarring and fragility of blood vessels.

Embolism is an obstruction of an artery, typically by a clot of blood or an air bubble, that has traveled from another part of the body.

Endoscopy is a procedure that uses an endoscope to examine the inside of the body. An endoscope is a thin, tube-like instrument with a light and a lens for viewing. It may also have a tool to remove tissue to be checked under a microscope for signs of disease.

Fibromuscular dysplasia is a rare blood vessel disorder that causes arteries to narrow and grow larger. FMD occurs when the strong, flexible cells in arteries are replaced with less strong, less flexible cells. This makes the arteries stiffer and more likely to be damaged.

Fistula is an abnormal connection between two epithelialized surfaces, often involving organs such as the gut, bladder, vagina, or skin, and can result from various causes including surgery, trauma, Crohn's disease, diverticular disease, or malignancy.

Flash pulmonary edema is a sudden and severe accumulation of fluid in the lungs, often due to abrupt increases in afterload or left atrial pressure, leading to life-threatening respiratory distress.

Gangrene is localized death of soft tissues due to loss of blood supply or serious bacterial infection.

Giant cell arteritis is a systemic inflammatory vascular disease that predominantly affects adults over 50 years old, characterized by granulomatous inflammation of the blood vessel walls, particularly the branches of the carotid and vertebral arteries, and is associated with symptoms such as headache, jaw claudication, visual disturbances, and tender/thickened temporal arteries.

Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is a blood test used to check how well the kidneys are working by estimating how much blood passes through the glomeruli (tiny filters in the kidneys that filter waste from the blood) each minute.

Hematoma is a mass of usually clotted blood that forms in a tissue, organ or body space as a result of a broken blood vessel.

Hemodynamic instability is a condition caused by abnormal or unstable blood pressure that results in improper circulation and organs of the body do not receive adequate blood flow. It is characterized by chest pain, confusion, abnormal heart rate, loss of consciousness, restlessness, shortness of breath, cold hands, arms, legs or feet.

Hemodynamic stability refers to the maintenance of adequate blood pressure and perfusion to ensure sufficient oxygen delivery to tissues without the need for excessive pharmacological support.

Table 1. Hemodynamic Assessment

Hemodynamic Parameters	Stable Circulation	Compensated Shock	Hypotensive Shock
Conscious Level	Clear and lucid	Clear and lucid	Restless, combative
Capillary refill	Brisk (less than 2 seconds)	Prolonged (greater than 2 seconds)	Very prolonged, mottled skin
Extremities	Warm and pink	Cool peripheries	Cold, clammy
Peripheral pulse	Good volume	Weak and thready	Feeble or absent
Heart Rate	Normal heart rate for age	Tachycardia for age	Severe tachycardia or bradycardia in late shock
Blood Pressure	Normal blood pressure and pulse pressure for age	Normal systolic pressure but rising diastolic pressure; Narrowing pulse pressure; Postural hypertension	Narrow pulse pressure (greater than or equal to 20 mm/Hg; Hypotension for age; Unrecordable blood pressure
Respiratory Rate	Normal respiratory rate for age	Tachypnea	Hyperpnea or Kussmaul's breathing (metabolic acidosis)
Urine Output	Normal	Reducing trend	Oliguria or anuria

Hemorrhage is a copious or heavy discharge of blood from the blood vessels.

Hepatic means relating to the liver

Hepatic portal system is the system of veins that transports blood from the digestive tract to the liver. It consists of the hepatic portal vein and other veins that drain into the hepatic portal vein, viz. the superior mesenteric vein, the inferior mesenteric vein and the splenic vein.

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is defined as a systolic blood pressure of 130 mm Hg or higher and/or a diastolic blood pressure of 80 mm Hg or higher in adults, regardless of the patient's weight in pounds.

Indeterminate findings are inconclusive or insufficient for treatment planning.

Intramural hematoma (IMH) is a collection of blood within the wall of the aorta, a life-threatening condition characterized by bleeding into the medial layer of the aortic wall without a visible entry tear into the lumen or a distinct intimal flap, distinguishing it from a true aortic dissection

Ischemia is a deficient supply of blood to a body part (such as the heart or brain) due to obstruction of the inflow of arterial blood.

Ischemic rest pain is a severe, unrelenting pain in the lower extremities, typically the feet, that occurs due to advanced peripheral artery disease (PAD) and is aggravated by elevation and relieved by dependency.

Loeys-Dietz syndrome is a rare autosomal dominant connective tissue disorder characterized by aggressive aortic aneurysms, arterial tortuosity, and distinctive craniofacial and skeletal features.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a non-invasive diagnostic technique that produces computerized images of internal body tissues and is based on nuclear magnetic resonance of atoms within the body induced by the application of radio waves.

Malignant is the presence of cancerous cells that have the ability to spread to other sites in the body (metastasize) or to invade nearby (locally) and destroy tissues. Malignant cells tend to have fast, uncontrolled growth and do not die normally due to changes in their genetic makeup.

Malignant hypertension is severe hypertension characterized by acute onset, causing necrosis (tissue death) of arteriolar walls in kidney and retinal hemorrhages and is rapidly progressive with poor prognosis.

Marfan syndrome is a disorder of connective tissue inherited as a dominant trait, characterized by abnormal elongation of the long bones and often with ocular and circulatory defects.

Mesenteric is a fold of membrane that attaches the intestine to the abdominal wall and holds it in place.

Nephrotic syndrome is a kidney disorder that causes the body to pass too much protein in the urine. Nephrotic syndrome is usually caused by damage to the clusters of small blood vessels in the kidneys that filter waste and excess water from the blood.

Neurofibromatosis is a rare genetic disorder that causes benign tumors to grow on nerves and other parts of the body. There are three types of neurofibromatosis: neurofibromatosis 1 (NF1), neurofibromatosis 2 (NF2) and schwannomatosis.

Non-diagnostic is a result that does not lead to a confirmed diagnosis.

Pediatric approximate ages are defined by the US Department of Health (USDH), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as the following:

1. Infancy, between birth and 2 years of age
2. Childhood, from 2 to 12 years of age
3. Adolescence, from 12 to 21 years of age, further defined by the AAP into:
 - a. Early (ages 11–14 years)
 - b. Middle (ages 15–17 years),
 - c. Late (ages 18–21 years)
 - d. Older ages may be appropriate for children with special healthcare needs.

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a narrowing or blockage of the blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to the legs. It's caused by a buildup of plaque, also known as atherosclerosis.

Periprocedural is a medical term that means occurring before, during, or after a medical procedure. "Perioperative" is another term that refers to the time around surgery.

Portal venous system is a paired network of valveless veins responsible for blood from all of the abdominal viscera, excluding the kidneys and adrenal glands.

Pulse volume recording (PVR) uses a blood pressure cuff and hand-held Doppler ultrasound device to determine the presence and severity of peripheral artery disease (PAD). The Doppler ultrasound records sound waves that bounce off moving objects, such as blood, to measure speed and flow.

Renal impairment is a condition in which the kidneys stop working and are not able to remove waste and extra water from the blood or keep body chemicals in balance.

Resistant hypertension is defined as a blood pressure that remains above goal despite concurrent use of three antihypertensive agents of different classes taken at maximally tolerated doses, one of which should be a diuretic (the diuretic should be selected based upon kidney function).

Segmental pressures are measured by combining Doppler ultrasound with blood pressure measurements at various locations in the arms and legs. By detecting differences in blood pressure at specific locations in different limbs, this test helps to diagnose arterial blockages and other circulation problems.

Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) is a tear in the wall of a coronary artery. It's an emergency condition that can slow or block blood flow to the heart. This can lead to a heart attack, heart rhythm problems or sudden death.

Stenosis is a narrowing or constriction of the diameter of a bodily passage or orifice.

Surveillance in cancer is the ongoing, timely and systematic collection and analysis of information on new cancer cases, extent of disease, screening tests, treatment, survival and cancer deaths.

Takayasu's arteritis is a chronic inflammatory disease especially of the aorta and its major branches (the brachiocephalic artery and left common carotid artery) that result in progressive stenosis, occlusion and aneurysm formation marked by diminution or loss of the pulse (as in the arm) and ischemic symptoms.

Thrombosis is the formation of a blood clot (partial or complete blockage) within blood vessels, whether venous or arterial, limiting the natural flow of blood and resulting in clinical sequela.

Toe Brachial Index (TBI) is defined as the ratio between the systolic blood pressure in the right or left toe and the higher of the systolic pressure in the right or left arms.

Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation/Replacement (TAVI/TAVR) is a minimally invasive procedure that replaces a diseased aortic valve with a man-made or animal tissue valve. TAVR is for patients with severe aortic stenosis, which is a narrowing of the valve

opening. The procedure only requires a small cut in the skin and does not require open-heart surgery.

Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS) is a procedure that creates a new connection between two blood vessels in the liver. The procedure involves inserting a stent (tube) into the liver to connect the portal veins to adjacent blood vessels with lower pressure.

Tuberous sclerosis is a genetic disorder of the skin and nervous system that is characterized by the formation of small benign tumors in various organs (such as the brain, kidney, eye and heart), is accompanied by variable symptoms including seizures, developmental delay or intellectual disability, skin lesions (as hypopigmented macules of the trunk and limbs or telangiectatic facial papules) and is inherited as an autosomal dominant trait or results from spontaneous mutation.

Ultrasound is the diagnostic or therapeutic use of ultrasound and especially a noninvasive technique involving the formation of images used for the examination and measurement of internal body structures and the detection of bodily abnormalities.

Vasculitis involves inflammation of the blood vessels. The inflammation can cause the walls of the blood vessels to thicken, which reduces the width of the passageway through the vessel. If blood flow is restricted, it can result in organ and tissue damage.

Venous thrombosis or compression is the formation of a blood clot in a blood vessel.

Williams syndrome is a developmental disorder that affects many parts of the body. This condition is characterized by mild to moderate intellectual disability or learning problems, unique personality characteristics, distinctive facial features and heart and blood vessel (cardiovascular) problems.

CTA/CTV Abdomen References

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Disclaimer section

Purpose

The purpose of the HealthHelp's clinical guidelines is to assist healthcare professionals in selecting the medical service that may be appropriate and supported by evidence to safely improve outcomes. Medical information is constantly evolving, and HealthHelp reserves the right to review and update these clinical guidelines periodically. HealthHelp reserves the right to include in these guidelines the clinical indications as appropriate for the organization's program objectives. Therefore the guidelines are not a list of all the clinical indications for a stated procedure, and associated Procedure Code Tables may not represent all codes available for that state procedure or that are managed by a specific client-organization.

Clinician Review

These clinical guidelines neither preempt clinical judgment of trained professionals nor advise anyone on how to practice medicine. Healthcare professionals using these clinical guidelines are responsible for all clinical decisions based on their assessment. All Clinical Reviewers are instructed to apply clinical indications based on individual patient assessment and documentation, within the scope of their clinical license.

Payment

The use of these clinical guidelines does not provide authorization, certification, explanation of benefits, or guarantee of payment; nor do the guidelines substitute for, or constitute, medical advice. Federal and State law, as well as member benefit contract language (including definitions and specific contract provisions/exclusions) take precedence over clinical guidelines and must be considered first when determining eligibility for coverage. All final determinations on coverage and payment are the responsibility of the health plan. Nothing contained within this document can be interpreted to mean otherwise.

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National and Local Coverage Determination (NCD and LCD)



NOTICE

To ensure appropriate review occurs to the most current NCD and/or LCD, always defer to <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/search.aspx>.

Background

National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD) are payment policy documents outlined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the government's delegated Medicare Audit Contractors (MACs) that operate regionally in jurisdictions.

CMS introduced variation between different jurisdictions/Medicare Audit Contractors (MACs) and their associated covered code lists with the transition to ICD 10. The variation resulted in jurisdictions independently defining how codes are applied for exclusions, limitations, groupings, ranges, etc. for the medical necessity indications outlined in the NCD and LCD. Due to this variation, there is an inconsistent use/application of codes and coverage determinations across the United States between the different MACs.

In addition, **WITHOUT** notice, CMS can change the codes that indicate medical necessity and the format of the coverage determinations/associated documents (eg, Articles). This is an additional challenge for organizations to keep up with ongoing, unplanned changes in covered codes and medical necessity indications.

Medical Necessity Codes

Due to the variation in code application between jurisdictions/MACs and that updates can happen without notification, HealthHelp is not able to guarantee full accuracy of the codes listed for any Coverage Determination, and advises that prior to use, the associated Coverage Determination Articles are reviewed to ensure applicability to HealthHelp's programs and any associated NCDs and LCDs.



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11248 11249 11253 11282 11325 11328 11333 11349 11350 11351 11352 11354 11355 11356
11358 11359 11360 11361 11362 11365 11366 11367 11368 11369 11370 11374 11375 11394
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