Indications for F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT Scans

Limitations/Requirements for Usage

Initial Treatment Strategy
F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT performed as part of an evaluation for determination of an initial treatment strategy is covered by CMS only with participation in the NOPR. F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT may be used both for diagnosis of strongly suspected bone metastases in a patient without a pathologically proven diagnosis of cancer and as part of initial staging in a patient with a pathologically proven cancer.

Note: F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT is covered only in clinical situations in which (1) the PET results may assist in avoiding an invasive diagnostic procedure, or in which (2) the PET results may assist in determining the optimal anatomical location to perform an invasive diagnostic procedure. In general, for most solid tumors, a tissue diagnosis is made prior to doing a PET bone scan and therefore the scan is performed for staging rather than diagnosis.

PET is not covered as a screening test (i.e., testing patients without specific signs and symptoms of disease).

Subsequent Treatment Strategy
F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT is also covered by CMS only with participation in the NOPR when used in subsequent treatment strategy to identify bone metastases in a patient with a pathologically proven cancer. F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT is covered for restaging and detection of suspected recurrences:

1. after completion of treatment for the purpose of detecting residual disease; or
2. for detecting suspected recurrence or metastasis; or
3. to determine the extent of a known recurrence:
4. if it could potentially replace one or more conventional imaging studies when it is expected that conventional study information is insufficient for the clinical management of the patient.
5. Restaging applies to testing after a course of treatment is completed, and is covered subject to the conditions above.

Comment: As noted above, F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT is not covered as a screening test (i.e., testing patients without specific signs and symptoms of disease) and thus is not covered for surveillance of patients treated for cancer in whom there is no clinical reason to suspect recurrent disease.

Treatment Monitoring
Treatment monitoring refers to use of PET to monitor tumor response to treatment during the planned course of therapy (i.e., when a change in therapy is anticipated).

Comment: As an example, F-18 Sodium Fluoride (NaF) PET/CT performed under NOPR may be covered for monitoring after 2 or 3 of a planned 6 cycles of chemotherapy in a patient considered not to be responding as expected.