

Reimbursement Policy

Oral Cancer Screening and Testing

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I. Policy Description

Oral cancer is defined as cancer occurring in the oral cavity between the vermilion border of the lips and the junction of the hard and soft palates or the posterior one third of the tongue. Squamous cell carcinoma is the most common type of oral cancer.¹

II. Indications and/or Limitations of Coverage

Application of coverage criteria is dependent upon an individual's benefit coverage at the time of the request. Specifications pertaining to Medicare and Medicaid can be found in the "Applicable State and Federal Regulations" section of this policy document.

- 1) To establish HPV tumor status for individuals with oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma or with metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of unknown primary origin in a cervical lymph node, testing for high-risk HPV with either mRNA expression testing for HPV E6/E7 or immunohistochemistry for p16 expression **MEETS COVERAGE CRITERIA**.

The following does not meet coverage criteria due to a lack of available published scientific literature confirming that the test(s) is/are required and beneficial for the diagnosis and treatment of an individual's illness.

- 2) To screen, detect, or diagnose oral cancer, the following testing **DOES NOT MEET COVERAGE CRITERIA**:
 - a) Salivary biomarker testing (e.g., peptides/proteins, nucleic acids, metabolites).
 - b) Genotyping of HPV (e.g., OraRisk® HPV).
 - c) Gene expression profiling.
 - d) Panels that incorporate genetic risk factors with nongenetic biomarkers (e.g., mRNA CancerDetect™).
 - e) Detection of HPV from an oropharyngeal swab (e.g., OmniPathology Oropharyngeal HPV PCR Test).

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III. Applicable State and Federal Regulations

DISCLAIMER: If there is a conflict between this Policy and any relevant, applicable government policy for a particular member [e.g., Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs) or National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) for Medicare and/or state coverage for Medicaid], then the government policy will be used to make the determination. For the most up-to-date Medicare policies and coverage, please visit the Medicare search website: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/search.aspx>. For the most up-to-date Medicaid policies and coverage, please visit the applicable state Medicaid website.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Many labs have developed specific tests that they must validate and perform in house. These laboratory-developed tests (LDTs) are regulated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) as high-complexity tests under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA '88). LDTs are not approved or cleared by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration; however, FDA clearance or approval is not currently required for clinical use.

IV. Applicable CPT/HCPCS Procedure Codes

CPT	Code Description
81599	Unlisted multianalyte assay with algorithmic analysis
82397	Chemiluminescent assay
87624	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); Human Papillomavirus (HPV), high-risk types (e.g., 16, 18, 31, 33, 35, 39, 45, 51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 68), pooled result
87625	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); Human Papillomavirus (HPV), types 16 and 18 only, includes type 45, if performed
87626	Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); Human Papillomavirus (HPV), separately reported high-risk types (e.g., 16, 18, 31, 45, 51, 52) and high-risk pooled result(s)
88341	Immunohistochemistry or immunocytochemistry, per specimen; each additional single antibody stain procedure (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
88342	Immunohistochemistry or immunocytochemistry, per specimen; initial single antibody stain procedure
0429U	Human papillomavirus (HPV), oropharyngeal swab, 14 high-risk types (ie, 16, 18, 31, 33, 35, 39, 45, 51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 66, and 68). Proprietary test: Omnipathology Oropharyngeal HPV PCR Test Lab/Manufacturer: OmniPathology Solutions, Medical Corporation

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Procedure codes appearing in Medical Policy documents are included only as a general reference tool for each policy. They may not be all-inclusive.

V. Evidence-based Scientific References

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VI. Revision History

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
09/04/2025	Reviewed and Updated: Updated background, guidelines, and evidence-based scientific references. Literature review necessitated the following changes in coverage criteria: Added “or with metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of unknown primary origin in a cervical lymph node” to CC1, now reads: “1) To establish HPV tumor status for individuals with oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma or with metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of unknown primary origin in a cervical lymph node, testing for high-risk HPV with either mRNA expression testing for HPV E6/E7 or immunohistochemistry for p16 expression MEETS COVERAGE CRITERIA.” New CC2.e.: “e) Detection of HPV from an oropharyngeal swab (e.g., OmniPathology Oropharyngeal HPV PCR Test).”
12/04/2024	Off-Cycle Coding Modification: Added CPT code 87626 (effective date 1/1/2025). Revised code description for CPT code 87624 (effective date 1/1/2025).