



TRICARE HELP E-MAIL SERVICE (THEMS) NEWSLETTER

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TRICARE_help@amedd.army.mil

“Helping to Understand”



TRICARE Help Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the TRICARE Help E-mail Service, operated by the US Army Medical Command in San Antonio, Texas.

THEMS

What is THEMS?

THEMS is a free e-mail service that provides quick answers to TRICARE questions. Clinical issues should be referred to your primary care provider. The e-mail address is: TRICARE_help@amedd.army.mil.



Click here to send your TRICARE questions, concerns, or comments.

Is This Covered?

One of the most frequent questions we receive is "what medical benefits or medications are covered?" In general terms, most medically appropriate, non-experimental treatment for a covered illness or injury is approved by TRICARE.

What does this mean to the beneficiary seeking treatment? First... medically appropriate. TRICARE provides medical care in accordance with currently accepted treatment standards of the medical community. Based upon medical history, symptoms, diagnosis, and professional judgment, the provider may perform appropriate testing and treatment. Normally, the less invasive and complex diagnostic tools must first be utilized, unless the provider furnishes medical evidence to support an exception. If the provider disagrees with TRICARE on the appropriate treatment, there are a variety of appeal procedures available to secure appropriate and timely treatment for the patient. Second... experimental procedures. TRICARE will not cost share unproven or experimental treatments. Some new treatments receive significant publicity but, upon further medical evaluation, prove to be either harmful or ineffective. These treatments are not covered. On the other hand, there are new procedures and products that, after

evaluation, prove to advance medical boundaries in the diagnosis and treatment of injury or disease. After a new product or procedure receives FDA approval, TRICARE performs a technical appraisal and, if feasible, adds the new treatment to the long list of approved TRICARE benefits. Last...covered illness or injury. TRICARE does not cover most cosmetic procedures, nor does it cover services by unauthorized providers such as chiropractors or acupuncturists. Most illnesses and injuries are considered covered conditions. The important thing to remember is to contact an expert, usually a health care finder at the nearest TRICARE Service Center, to discuss clinical aspects of your case. Unique characteristics of your condition may mean a treatment that is normally not covered may be approved by TRICARE. Examples include adjunctive dental care and cosmetic surgery in response to disfigurement, such as breast reconstruction or repair after burn injuries. With respect to medications, most FDA approved medications are

available if medically necessary. If a suitable generic medication is available, that medication will be provided, unless the prescribing physician provides medical support to the contrary. Likewise, TRICARE will normally contract with drug companies to provide popular medications at a discount. For example, Zocor is the preferred brand in the Statin class of drugs to reduce cholesterol. If, however, the doctor provides medical support to prescribe Lipitor rather than Zocor, the patient will be able to get the appropriate drug to treat his or her condition. The TRICARE Handbook provides information on both covered and non-covered benefits. Likewise, the TRICARE Policy Manual contains detailed information about your benefits. Both publications are available on line and can be accessed through the pull-down menu on the TRICARE website (www.tricare.osd.mil). As always, you can contact us through THEMS for help with understanding your benefit.