



Plain language summary

Kinesiology (Kinesio) taping (KT)

Utilization Management policy # 483

Plain Language Summaries are a service provided to help patients better understand the complicated and often mystifying language of modern healthcare.

Plain Language Summaries are presented to supplement the associated clinical policy or guideline. These summaries are not a substitute for advice from your own healthcare provider.

What is Kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT) and what is known about it so far?

Kinesiology tape (KT) is a thin, stretchy, and hypoallergenic tape. It has been used for both spinal and extremity conditions. Kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT) is used for pain relief, to decrease swelling and inflammation, and support overused muscles.

Information about kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT) is easily found on vendor and healthcare websites. The uses of kinesiology taping (KT) are largely based on laboratory studies performed on healthy individuals and low-quality clinical research. There is a lack of higher quality information, which is usually needed to make confident judgments about benefits and risks.

How was Kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT) evaluated?

A work group of clinicians was assigned to review the available research. The internet was searched for articles about kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT). The work group independently examined the selected research studies. A broadly accepted rating scale was used. Possible ratings were high, moderate, low, or very low quality. Additionally, the positions and guidelines of other professional and healthcare groups were evaluated.

Before it was approved, the policy was presented to a series of committees that included independent health care practitioners.

What did the work group find?

There is only limited research about the effectiveness of kinesiology taping (KT) for the treatment of spinal and extremity disorders. The overall research quality was rated as low. Better quality studies are needed.

It was not possible to decide that kinesiology taping (KT) provided more benefit or less risk, when compared to generally accepted and safe treatments including traditional taping procedures.

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What are the limitations of the information?

Several studies involve only healthy people. Others include very specific groups, such as only women. So, it is not clear if positive results apply to different groups.

The use of kinesiology taping (KT) for many spinal and extremity disorders has not been studied.

What are the conclusions?

Kinesiology (kinesio) taping (KT) is viewed as unproven and not medically necessary. Further research is needed before its use can be considered an established treatment option for any spinal or extremity condition.