

# will medicare cover massage therapy

**will medicare cover massage therapy** is a common question among seniors and individuals seeking alternative treatments for pain relief and rehabilitation. Medicare, the federal health insurance program primarily for those aged 65 and older, generally covers a wide range of medical services, but coverage for massage therapy is not straightforward. This article explores the specifics of Medicare coverage related to massage therapy, including when it might be covered, exceptions, and alternatives. Understanding the nuances of Medicare's policies can help beneficiaries make informed decisions about their healthcare options. Additionally, the article will outline the role of massage therapy in medical treatment, the requirements for coverage, and tips for maximizing benefits. The following sections provide a comprehensive guide on this topic.

- Understanding Medicare and Massage Therapy
- Medicare Coverage Criteria for Massage Therapy
- Alternatives to Medicare-Covered Massage Therapy
- How to Obtain Coverage or Reimbursement
- Additional Considerations and Tips

## Understanding Medicare and Massage Therapy

Medicare is designed to cover medically necessary services and treatments, but it has strict guidelines regarding what is included. Massage therapy, although widely recognized as beneficial for various health conditions, is often classified as a complementary or alternative therapy rather than a medically necessary service. This classification significantly impacts whether or not Medicare will cover the costs associated with massage therapy sessions.

## What Is Medicare?

Medicare is a federal program providing health insurance to people aged 65 and older, younger individuals with disabilities, and those with End-Stage Renal Disease. It consists of different parts: Part A (hospital insurance), Part B (medical insurance), Part C (Medicare Advantage), and Part D (prescription drug coverage). Each part covers specific services, with Part B being the most relevant for outpatient treatments such as physical therapy and potentially massage therapy.

# **The Role of Massage Therapy in Healthcare**

Massage therapy involves the manipulation of soft tissues to relieve pain, reduce stress, improve circulation, and promote healing. It is often used for conditions including chronic pain, arthritis, fibromyalgia, and post-surgical rehabilitation. While many patients report significant benefits, Medicare's coverage decisions depend on the clinical necessity and evidence supporting the treatment.

## **Medicare Coverage Criteria for Massage Therapy**

Whether Medicare will cover massage therapy depends heavily on the context of the treatment and how it is billed. Generally, Medicare does not cover massage therapy when it is considered a standalone service. However, in certain specific medical cases, coverage may be possible under strict guidelines.

## **Medicare Part B and Massage Therapy**

Medicare Part B covers outpatient medical services, which may include physical therapy and occupational therapy. However, massage therapy itself is usually not covered unless it is part of a medically necessary treatment plan ordered and supervised by a physician or qualified healthcare provider. Even then, the therapy must be provided by a licensed professional recognized by Medicare.

## **Conditions That May Qualify for Coverage**

Medicare may cover massage therapy if it is prescribed as part of a treatment for:

- Post-operative rehabilitation
- Chronic pain management related to specific medical conditions
- Severe muscle spasms or injuries
- Neurological disorders requiring physical therapy

In such cases, massage therapy is typically covered as a component of physical or occupational therapy rather than as an independent service.

## **Documentation and Medical Necessity**

For Medicare to approve coverage, the healthcare provider must document the medical necessity of

massage therapy in the patient's treatment plan. This includes detailed notes on diagnosis, goals of therapy, expected outcomes, and progress. Without sufficient documentation, claims for massage therapy are usually denied.

## **Alternatives to Medicare-Covered Massage Therapy**

Since Medicare coverage for massage therapy is limited, beneficiaries often explore alternative options to access this treatment. These alternatives may involve other insurance plans, out-of-pocket payments, or complementary therapies covered by Medicare.

### **Medicare Advantage Plans**

Some Medicare Advantage (Part C) plans offer additional benefits beyond Original Medicare, including coverage for alternative therapies like massage therapy. Coverage varies widely between plans, so it is essential to review the specific benefits offered by each plan to determine if massage therapy is included.

### **Medicaid and Other State Programs**

Medicaid programs, which vary by state, may provide coverage for massage therapy under certain conditions. Some states include massage therapy in their Medicaid benefits for pain management or rehabilitation services. Checking with the local Medicaid office can provide information about available coverage options.

### **Out-of-Pocket and Flexible Spending Accounts**

Many patients pay for massage therapy out-of-pocket when Medicare does not cover it. Additionally, if eligible, using a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA) can help offset costs, as these funds are designated for medical expenses, including some alternative therapies.

## **How to Obtain Coverage or Reimbursement**

Maximizing the chance of Medicare covering massage therapy involves proper documentation, following Medicare guidelines, and working closely with healthcare providers.

## Steps to Ensure Coverage

1. Obtain a physician's referral specifying massage therapy as part of a treatment plan.
2. Ensure therapy is provided by a licensed professional recognized by Medicare.
3. Maintain detailed medical records demonstrating the necessity and effectiveness of therapy.
4. Submit claims promptly with all required documentation.
5. Appeal denied claims if there is evidence supporting the medical necessity.

## Working with Healthcare Providers

Healthcare providers play a crucial role in securing Medicare coverage for massage therapy. They must provide clear justifications and documentation, prescribe therapy appropriately, and coordinate care to meet Medicare's criteria. Patients should communicate openly with their providers about coverage concerns and treatment goals.

## Additional Considerations and Tips

Understanding Medicare's limitations and exploring all available options can help beneficiaries make informed decisions regarding massage therapy.

## Costs and Coverage Limitations

Even when Medicare covers massage therapy as part of physical therapy, beneficiaries may be responsible for copayments or coinsurance. Coverage limits, such as the number of covered sessions, may also apply. It is essential to clarify these details before beginning treatment.

## Choosing a Qualified Provider

Medicare requires that massage therapy be performed by licensed or certified providers recognized under the program. Selecting a qualified therapist ensures compliance with Medicare rules and increases the likelihood of coverage.

## **Complementary and Integrative Medicine Trends**

As interest in integrative medicine grows, Medicare policies may evolve to include broader coverage for therapies like massage. Staying informed about policy changes and new benefit offerings can help beneficiaries access the most current options.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does Medicare cover massage therapy for pain management?**

Medicare generally does not cover massage therapy as a standalone treatment for pain management unless it is part of a broader, medically necessary therapy plan prescribed by a doctor.

### **Can I get massage therapy covered by Medicare if it's prescribed by my doctor?**

Medicare typically does not cover massage therapy even if prescribed by a doctor, unless it is included as part of a covered physical therapy or rehabilitation program.

### **Are there any Medicare Advantage plans that cover massage therapy?**

Some Medicare Advantage plans may offer additional benefits, including coverage for massage therapy, but this varies by plan and location. It's important to check with your specific plan provider.

### **Is massage therapy covered under Medicare Part B?**

Medicare Part B generally does not cover massage therapy services unless they are part of a medically necessary treatment that falls under physical therapy or outpatient rehabilitation services.

### **What alternatives does Medicare cover for conditions commonly treated with massage therapy?**

Medicare may cover physical therapy, chiropractic care, and occupational therapy, which can be alternatives to massage therapy for conditions like musculoskeletal pain or rehabilitation.

### **Can Medicare cover massage therapy for patients with chronic conditions like arthritis?**

Medicare typically does not cover massage therapy for chronic conditions such as arthritis, but may cover other treatments like physical therapy that can help manage symptoms.

# How can I find out if my massage therapist accepts Medicare or Medicare Advantage?

Most massage therapists do not accept Medicare. To find out if a provider accepts Medicare or Medicare Advantage, you should contact the provider directly or check with your Medicare Advantage plan for covered providers.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *Medicare and Massage Therapy: What You Need to Know*

This book offers a comprehensive guide to understanding Medicare coverage as it relates to massage therapy. It explains the different parts of Medicare, what services are covered, and the circumstances under which massage therapy might be reimbursed. The author also provides tips for navigating Medicare claims and working with healthcare providers to maximize benefits.

### 2. *Insurance Insights: Navigating Massage Therapy Coverage Under Medicare*

Focused on the intersection of insurance policies and therapeutic services, this book breaks down the complexities of Medicare coverage for massage therapy. It includes case studies and real-life examples to illustrate how beneficiaries can access massage therapy without incurring excessive out-of-pocket costs. Readers will learn how to advocate for coverage and understand policy language.

### 3. *Medicare, Medicaid, and Alternative Therapies: Massage Therapy Explained*

This title explores how both Medicare and Medicaid approach coverage for alternative therapies like massage. It discusses eligibility requirements, documentation needed for claims, and how to find providers who accept Medicare. Additionally, the book reviews recent changes in policy that impact massage therapy reimbursement.

### 4. *Healing Hands and Medicare: A Practical Guide to Coverage for Massage Therapy*

Aimed at patients and practitioners alike, this guide demystifies the process of obtaining Medicare coverage for massage therapy. It outlines which medical conditions might qualify for coverage and how massage therapy fits into a broader treatment plan. The book also offers advice on working with healthcare providers to ensure treatments are medically necessary.

### 5. *Massage Therapy and Medicare: Myths and Realities*

This book addresses common misconceptions about Medicare coverage for massage therapy and provides factual information to help readers make informed decisions. It clarifies what is and isn't covered, the role of physician referrals, and how massage therapy can be integrated into conventional medical treatment plans. The book is useful for both patients and healthcare professionals.

### 6. *Understanding Medicare Coverage for Complementary Health Services*

While not exclusively about massage therapy, this book covers Medicare's stance on various complementary and integrative health services, including massage. It explains policy frameworks,

coverage limitations, and the documentation required for reimbursement. The author also discusses trends in healthcare that may influence future coverage decisions.

#### *7. Financial Planning for Seniors: Maximizing Medicare Benefits for Massage Therapy*

This book helps seniors plan their healthcare finances with a focus on maximizing Medicare benefits related to massage therapy. It includes budgeting tips, information on supplemental insurance plans, and strategies for negotiating costs with massage therapists. Readers gain a clearer understanding of how to manage therapy expenses within the constraints of Medicare.

#### *8. Medicare Advantage and Massage Therapy: Options and Opportunities*

This book explores how Medicare Advantage plans differ from traditional Medicare in terms of coverage for massage therapy. It reviews various plan options, benefits, and limitations, helping readers select plans that might cover therapeutic massage. The book also provides insights into appealing denied claims and coordinating care through managed plans.

#### *9. Massage Therapy for Chronic Conditions: Medicare Coverage Explained*

Targeting individuals with chronic health conditions, this book discusses how Medicare may cover massage therapy as part of long-term treatment plans. It outlines qualifying conditions, necessary medical documentation, and how massage therapy can complement other treatments. The author includes patient testimonials and expert opinions to highlight the benefits and challenges of obtaining coverage.

## **Will Medicare Cover Massage Therapy**

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**will medicare cover massage therapy: Massage Therapy** Susan G. Salvo, 2015-04-13  
Covering massage fundamentals, techniques, and anatomy and physiology, Susan Salvo's *Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice*, 5th Edition brings a whole new meaning to the word 'comprehensive.' This student-friendly text boasts more than 700 illustrations and expanded sections on neuroscience, research, and special populations, plus new line drawings in the kinesiology chapter of origins and insertions that match the painted skeletons found in most classrooms. It makes the essential principles of massage therapy more approachable and prepares you for success in class, on licensing and board certification exams, and in a wide range of therapeutic practice settings. Clear, straightforward approach simplifies complex content for easier understanding. Complete anatomy and physiology section, in addition to material on techniques and foundations, gives you all the information you need in just one book. Certification Practice Exam on Evolve mimics the major certification exams in format and content, builds confidence, and helps increase pass rates. Over 700 high-quality illustrations, including line drawings and halftones, clarify difficult

concepts in vibrant detail. Case studies challenge you to think critically and apply your understanding to realistic scenarios, foster open-mindedness, and stimulate dialogue. Profile boxes provide an inspirational, real-world perspective on massage practice from some of the most respected authorities in massage and bodywork. Clinical Massage chapter focuses on massage in clinical settings like hospitals, nursing homes, and medical offices to broaden your career potential. Two business chapters loaded with skills to make you more marketable and better prepared for today's competitive job market. Video icons refer you to the Evolve site featuring about 120 minutes of video covering techniques, routines, client interaction sequences, and case studies that facilitate the learning process and the practical application of the material. Evolve icons listed in each chapter encourage you to go beyond the lecture and reading assignments and learn more on the Evolve site. Evolve boxes at the end of each chapter list Chapter Extras found on Evolve that reinforce concepts learned in the chapter. NEW! Revised line drawing color scheme for origin and insertion matches the painted skeleton found in most classrooms, maintains consistency, and prevents confusion in learning origin and insertion points on the body. NEW! Coverage of Thai massage provides up-to-date content on the most useful, in-demand modalities that are most often requested by clients - and better prepares you for what you will encounter during training and practice. NEW! Updated text reflects changes to the new board certification exam so you have the most up-to-date, relevant information - and are fully prepared to pass the current exams. NEW! Brand new Think About It, Webquest, and Discussion features in each chapter's Test Your Knowledge section build your vocabulary usage and critical thinking skills necessary for day-to-day work with clients. EXPANDED! More content on pain theories, the neuromatrix model, and pain management, plus updated guidelines for massage after surgery and injury, equips you with essential information when working in rehab. NEW! Updated instructor resources, featuring more TEACH lesson plan classroom activities and an additional 500 test questions, provide instructors with more ways to interact with and test students.

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**will medicare cover massage therapy:** What You Must Know About Strokes Amytis Towfighi,



Laura Stevens, MSci, 2020-07-31 No one is ever prepared for a stroke. It just happens, and when it does, the results can be life altering. From difficulties with communication to weakness, numbness, and cognitive difficulties, a stroke can have a wide range of consequences. For most people affected by a stroke, a flood of questions come afterward: How did this happen? What do we do next? What are our options? How long will recovery take? Am I at risk for another stroke? To answer these questions and so many others, stroke specialist Dr. Amytis Towfighi and best-selling health writer and stroke survivor Laura Stevens have written *What You Must Know About Strokes*. Written in plain English, this useful guide offers all the information stroke survivors and their loved ones need to know in order to ask the right questions and make informed decisions. The book is divided into four parts. Part 1 explains what a stroke is and which risk factors increase the odds of having a stroke. It also includes information on identifying the early signs of a stroke and what to do when they appear. Part 2 looks at the immediate care given to stroke survivors as they are brought into a hospital setting. Part 3 details the most common rehabilitation treatments given to stroke patients to help them regain their ability to carry out their daily activities, mobility, speech, and cognition. These include occupational, physical, and speech therapies. It also discusses a number of complementary and alternative treatments that may be helpful. Part 4 offers important suggestions on lifestyle and nutrition to help patients avoid another stroke. Part 5 provides a look at life after a stroke and the issues stroke survivors may face. It offers practical and easy-to-follow advice on moving forward. The book also offers a section of resources, listing services and agencies that provide answers and assistance to stroke patients and their families. The many challenges of dealing with a stroke are great—for patients as well as their loved ones. The road back is not always easy. Understanding what is happening and what treatment options are available is crucial. The information contained in this book can greatly benefit anyone dealing with the aftermath of a stroke and make all the difference in the world.

**will medicare cover massage therapy: Consumer Health and Integrative Medicine, Third Edition** Linda Baily Synovitz, Karl L. Larson, 2025-08-12 Today, being a health consumer encompasses more than being knowledgeable about traditional medicine and health practice; it also requires one to be well-informed about the expanding field of complementary and integrative health and healthcare. *Consumer Health and Integrative Medicine: A Holistic View of Alternative Medicine Systems and Complementary Health Care* expands upon the many alternative modalities that other consumer health texts overlook. It includes chapters on major alternative medicine systems and healing modalities, including Ayurvedic medicine; traditional Chinese medicine; naturopathic and homeopathic medicine; mind-body interventions; energy therapies; botanicals; aromatherapy and essential oils; and manipulative and body-based therapies. The authors' mission is to help readers increase their knowledge base and become informed consumers. New research and statistics regarding the various complementary and alternative methodologies. Three New Chapters: Native American Medicine and Healing Traditions (8), Kampo Medicine of Japan (11), and Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM) (12) Changes in terminology to comply with updated National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) terminology New information on the cost of health care in the U.S. as compared with other advanced countries, including prescription drug prices. Added content on health product advertising practices, including internet-based and social media advertising. Discussion of how consumers can protect their rights and more detailed information on current types of fraud. *Consumer Health Alternative & Complementary Healthcare Integrative Health/Medicine Holistic Healing/Health/Medicine* © 2026 | 350 pages

**will medicare cover massage therapy: Mosby's® Massage Therapy Exam Review - E-Book** Sandy Fritz, Luke Allen Fritz, 2023-09-11 Written by massage therapy experts Sandy Fritz and Luke Fritz, this unique review resource uses a variety of methods to help you prepare for the MBLEx (Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam) and the Board Certification in Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (BCTMB). The comprehensive review features updated content and questions based on the most current exam blueprints! The practice exams are written in a five-part process — not just as sample questions. Plus, a companion Evolve website comes loaded with

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**will medicare cover massage therapy:** *Cancer Care for the New Millennium--integrative Oncology* United States. Congress. House. Committee on Government Reform, 2001

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**will medicare cover massage therapy:** *Overcoming Acute and Chronic Pain* Marc S. Micozzi, Sebhia Marie Dibra, 2016-12-15 Find the holistic treatment that will work best for you based on your emotional type and specific pain condition • Provides an easy questionnaire to determine your emotional type and an interactive self-assessment for finding the right pain treatment for your condition • Explores mind-body treatments for many common pain conditions, including arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel, migraines, carpal tunnel, and PTSD • Reviews the scientific evidence in support of acupuncture, biofeedback, hypnosis, massage, chiropractic, yoga, herbs, and essential oils Throughout history many healing traditions have focused on analgesia--the alleviation of pain--an area in which modern medicine provides few options beyond narcotics, steroids, and surgery. For those seeking drug- and surgery-free alternatives or complements to conventional pain management, the choices can be overwhelming. How do you know which method will work for you? In this guide to safe and effective natural therapies for acute and chronic pain, authors Marc S. Micozzi, M.D., Ph.D., and Sebhia Marie Dibra explain how your emotional boundary style--how you react to emotional, social, environmental, and physical stresses--affects which complementary treatments will work best for you. Providing an easy questionnaire to determine your emotional type and an interactive self-assessment for finding the right pain treatment for your condition, they explore the effectiveness of mind-body treatments for each emotional type and for many common pain disorders, including arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel, ulcer, migraine headaches, carpal tunnel, anxiety, PTSD, and other chronic pain conditions. They review the available research and scientific evidence in support of each therapy, suggesting only well-established, safe, and clinically proven alternative treatments, such as acupuncture, biofeedback, hypnosis, massage, chiropractic, yoga, herbs, and essential oils. Approaching pain holistically, they reveal how pain should be understood as a dynamic condition--an interaction

between mind and body as well as between patient and therapy--and how your emotional type is key to long-lasting and successful results.

**will medicare cover massage therapy:** Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Government-funded Health Programs United States. Congress. House. Committee on Government Reform, United States. Congress. House. Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, 1999

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**will medicare cover massage therapy:** *Mental Health in Older People Across Cultures* Nhi-Ha Trinh, Iqbal Ahmed, Dinesh Bhugra, 2024-12-27 As people across all nations around the world are beginning to live longer, the World Health Organization estimates the number of older adults will double to 1.5 billion by 2050. This presents visible increases in older adult mental health issues, and it is therefore vital that we understand the cross-cultural impact of social determinants of health in psychiatric illness and care in aging adults. As part of the Oxford Cultural Psychiatry series, *Mental Health in Older People Across Cultures* provides a detailed overview of the diverse factors, including socioeconomic and systemic factors within and across countries that impact the process of ageing, mental health and illnesses of older adults, and their care. This unique resource provides a necessary clinical understanding of factors on ageing, and the varied roles that families and caregivers have on the ageing process, with an emphasis on highlighting similarities and differences across cultures. The second half of the book then focuses on specific disorders in older adults across the globe affected by these factors, the nuances impacting diagnosis and treatment of these disorders, as well as research and development of healthcare policy. Written by experts in the field from across the world, this comprehensive book will be of great interest to a diversity of readers, from psychiatrists to trainees, general practitioners to social workers, and many other mental health providers. From epidemiology to economics and substance use disorders, and from East Asia, to Africa, and the Americas, this valuable addition to the field of mental health in older adults provides a world of fascinating insight.

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**will medicare cover massage therapy: *Geriatric Palliative Care*** Suzanne Goldhirsch, 2014-03-21 The growing geriatric population in the United States has created an increasing need for palliative medicine services across the range of medical and surgical specialties. Yet, palliative medicine lacks the resources to carry such a workload itself. *Geriatric Palliative Care* addresses this need by encouraging individual specialties to own the management of elderly with the same vigor as they own other key management competencies within their specialty. This clinically focused and highly practical handbook, which compliments the more comprehensive text *Geriatric Palliative Care* by Sean Morrison and Diane Meier (Oxford University Press, 2003), encourages this process of learning and ownership across many medical specialties. Designed to be readable and easily accessible to a range of health care providers, *Geriatric Palliative Care* outlines specific strategies for caring for specific palliative care issues common in elderly patients. The handbook also provides evidence based advice for helping patients, relatives, and staff cope with such issues as polypharmacy, dementia and consent, multiple pathologies, home care, elderly caregivers, and supporting the elderly in the place where they would like to be.

**will medicare cover massage therapy: *A Growing Faith*** Mary Jane Gonzales, 2013-03-12 In her sequel to *In the Blink of an Eye...My Life With RSDS*, Mary Jane Gonzales shares her continuing journey with Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome/Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome, which led her to *A Growing Faith*. Though a believer for years, Mary Jane discovers the truth... You don't know God is all you need until he is all you have. (Unknown) Join Mary Jane as she recounts the events of a unique and unexpected life; a life of crusading, though confined, of advocating for awareness and living a life of purpose. Although her disability keeps her from being active, she is sustained by faith and seeks to encourage others. Choosing to rise above her suffering, she is motivated to minister

through her writing and card making. Like many others, she hopes to raise awareness of her disease to expand research and hasten a cure. This book is an inspiration to all who read it. It lets every person that suffers with RSDS/CRPS know that life is a journey and, with support from family and friends, they can make it. Dorothy Cormier, caregiver and friend

**will medicare cover massage therapy: Health Promotion and Aging** David Haber, 2016-03-28 The seventh edition of this classic text champions healthy aging by demonstrating how to prevent or manage disease and make large-scale improvements toward health and wellness in the older adult population. The text synthesizes state-of-the-art research findings—providing convincing evidence that health promotion truly works—with practical, effective strategies. Encompassing important research results that supplant prior recommendations, this new edition provides updated best practices and strategies to ensure the active participation of older adults in all aspects of life. Completely reorganized for ease of use, this textbook features updated demographics and rankings for leading causes of death, new blood pressure screening guidelines and data on obesity and diabetes, updated exercise regimens, older-driver statistics and innovations such as the driverless car, cautions regarding ineffective brain-training programs, and more. Highly practical, the text includes health-promoting tools, resource lists, assessment tools, illustrations, checklists, and tables. Additionally, the book includes key terms and learning objectives at the start of each chapter, along with thought-provoking questions and reflection boxes. An Instructor's Manual and PowerPoint slides are available to facilitate teaching. New to the Seventh Edition: Provides updated blood pressure, cholesterol, Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (DCIS), and lung cancer screening guidelines Presents updates on exercise regimens ranging from yoga to the tango Expands and updates section on emotional regulation and conflict resolution skills with aging Discusses Boomer Entrepreneurism Provides new policy recommendations including student loan debt among older adults Expands gerotechnology and smart home innovations Updates on "Obamacare" and health care delivery recommendations Addresses "Buyer Beware" regarding brain-training programs Expands global aging and LGBT aging content

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