

Current Procedural Coding Expert

CPT° codes with Medicare essentials for enhanced accuracy



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Introduction

Welcome to Optum360's Current Procedural Coding Expert, an exciting Medicare coding and reimbursement tool and definitive procedure coding source that combines the work of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), American Medical Association (AMA), and Optum360 experts with the technical components you need for proper reimbursement and coding accuracy. Handy snap in tabs are included to indicate those sections used most often for easy reference.

This approach to CPT® Medicare coding utilizes innovative and intuitive ways of communicating the information you need to code claims accurately and efficiently. *Includes* and *Excludes* notes, similar to those found in the ICD-10-CM manual, help determine what services are related to the codes you are reporting. Icons help you crosswalk the code you are reporting to laboratory and radiology procedures necessary for proper reimbursement. CMS-mandated icons and relative value units (RVUs) help you determine which codes are most appropriate for the service you are reporting. Add to that additional information identifying age and sex edits, ambulatory surgery center (ASC) and ambulatory payment classification (APC) indicators, and Medicare coverage and payment rule citations, and *Current Procedural Coding Expert* provides the best in Medicare procedure reporting.

Current Procedural Coding Expert includes the information needed to submit claims to federal contractors and most commercial payers, and is correct at the time of printing. However, CMS, federal contractors, and commercial payers may change payment rules at any time throughout the year. Current Procedural Coding Expert includes effective codes that will not be published in the AMA's Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) book until the following year. Commercial payers will announce changes through monthly news or information posted on their websites. CMS will post changes in policy on its website at http://www.cms.gov/transmittals. National and local coverage determinations (NCDs and LCDs) provide universal and individual contractor guidelines for specific services. The existence of a procedure code does not imply coverage under any given insurance plan.

Current Procedural Coding Expert is based on the AMA's Current Procedural Terminology coding system, which is copyrighted and owned by the physician organization. The CPT codes are the nation's official, Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant code set for procedures and services provided by physicians, ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), and hospital outpatient services, as well as laboratories, imaging centers, physical therapy clinics, urgent care centers, and others.

Getting Started with Current Procedural Coding Expert

Current Procedural Coding Expert is an exciting tool combining the most current material at the time of our publication from the AMA's CPT 2022, CMS's online manual system, the Correct Coding initiative, CMS fee schedules, official Medicare guidelines for reimbursement and coverage, the Integrated Outpatient Code Editor (I/OCE), and Optum360's own coding expertise.

These coding rules and guidelines are incorporated into more specific section notes and code notes. Section notes are listed under a range of codes and apply to all codes in that range. Code notes are found under individual codes and apply to the single code.

Material is presented in a logical fashion for those billing Medicare, Medicaid, and many private payers. The format, based on customer comments, better addresses what customers tell us they need in a comprehensive Medicare procedure coding guide.

Designed to be easy to use and full of information, this product is an excellent companion to your AMA CPT manual, and other Optum360 and Medicare resources.

In anticipation of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (COVID-19) vaccines receiving Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) and/or FDA approval, and in order to expedite the availability of codes for coding and reimbursement, the AMA released a set of codes (0001A-0104A, 91300-91310) to be utilized upon receipt of EUA or FDA approval. In *Current Procedural Coding Expert*, these codes have been designated as placeholders and **PLACEHOLDER ONLY** appears next to the code. When the AMA releases an official code descriptor, Optum360 will update the corresponding electronic files and will provide updates to customers to allow them to update their *Current Procedural Coding Expert* book

For mid-year code updates, official errata changes, correction notices, and any other changes pertinent to the information in *Current Procedural Coding Expert*, see our product update page at https://www.optum360coding.com/ProductUpdates/. The password for 2022 is PROCEDURE2022.

Note: The AMA releases code changes quarterly as well as errata or corrections to CPT codes and guidelines and posts them on their website. Some of these changes may not appear in the AMA's CPT book until the following year. Current Procedural Coding Expert incorporates the most recent errata or release notes found on the AMA's website at our publication time, including new, revised and deleted codes. Current Procedural Coding Expert identifies these new or revised codes from the AMA website errata or release notes with an icon similar to the AMA's current new ● and revised ▲ icons. For purposes of this publication, new CPT codes and revisions that won't be in the AMA book until the next edition are indicated with a ● and a ▲ icon. CPT codes that are new or revised during 2021 but do not appear in the AMA's CPT code book until 2023 are identified in appendix B as "Web Release New, Revised, and Deleted Codes." For the next year's edition of Current Procedural Coding Expert, these codes will appear with standard black new or revised icons, as appropriate, to correspond with those changes as indicated in the AMA's CPT book.

General Conventions

Many of the sources of information in this book can be determined by color.

All CPT codes and descriptions and the Evaluation and Management quidelines from the American Medical Association are in **black text**.

Includes, Excludes, and other notes appear in blue text. The
resources used for this information are a variety of Medicare policy
manuals, the National Correct Coding Initiative Policy Manual (NCCI),
AMA resources and guidelines, and specialty association resources
and our Optum360 clinical experts.

Resequencing of CPT Codes

The American Medical Association (AMA) employs a numbering methodology of resequencing, which is the practice of displaying codes outside of their numerical order according to the description relationship. According to the AMA, there are instances in which a new code is needed within an existing grouping of codes, but an unused code number is not available. In these situations, the AMA will resequence the codes. In other words, it will assign a code that is not in numeric sequence with the related codes.

An example of resequencing from *Current Procedural Coding Expert* follows:

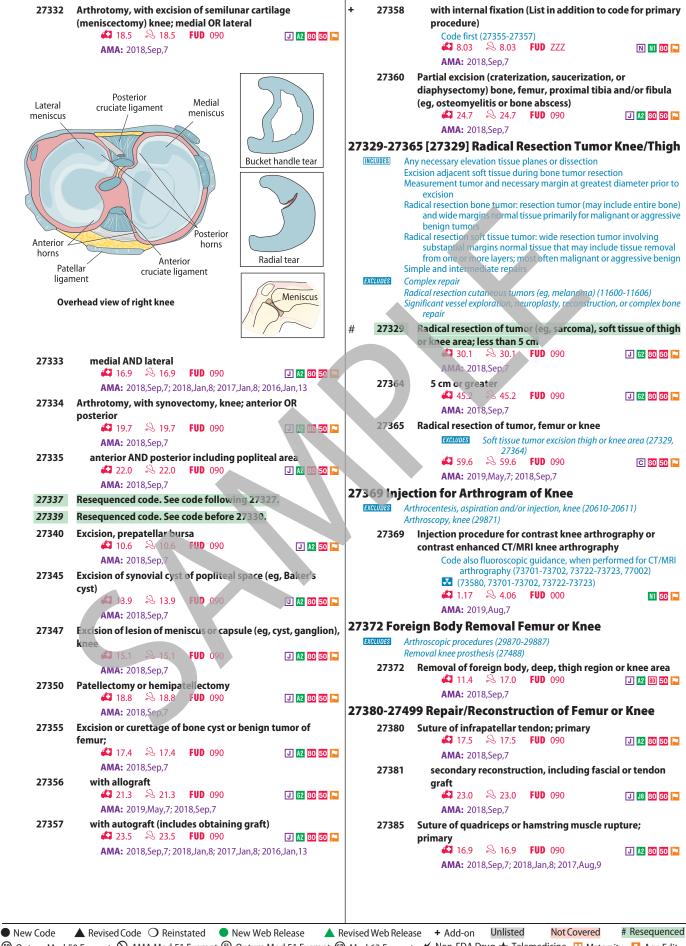
	21555	Excision, tumor, soft tissue of neck or anterior thorax, subcutaneous; less than 3 cm	
#	21552	3 cm or greater	
	21556	Excision, tumor, soft tissue of neck or anterior thorax, subfascial (eg, intramuscular); less than 5 cm	
#	21554	5 cm or greater	

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34151, 34201, 34203, 34401, 34421,	Carotid Artery, 36100, 36221-36224, 36227-	36584-36585, [36572, 36573]	CBS, 81401, 81406
34451, 61645	36228	Second Order, 36012	CcEe Antigens, 81403
Transcatheter Therapy, 36640, 36660, 62320-	Central, 36555-36558, 36560-36561, 36563,	Umbilical Vein, 36510	CCHC-type zinc finger nucleic acid binding pro-
62327, [37211, 37212, 37213, 37214]	36565-36566, 36578, 36580-36583	Ventricular, 61020, 61026, 61210, 61215,	tein, [81187]
Ureteral	Cerebral Artery, 36215	62160-62162, 62164, 62225	CCND1/IGH (t(11;14)), [81168]
Manometric Studies, 50396, 50686	Cystourethroscopy	Vertebral Artery, 36100, 36221, 36225-36226,	CCR5, 81400
Ureterography, 50684	Ejaculatory Duct, 52010	36228	CCU (Critical Care Unit)
Ureteropyelography, 50684	Ureteral, 52005	with Cholecystostomy, 47490	See Critical Care Services
Catheterization	with Insertion Transprostatic Implant,	Cauda Equina	CD109, [81112]
Abdomen, 49324, 49418-49419, 49421	52441-52442	See Spinal Cord	CD142 Antigens, 85250
Abdominal Artery, 36245-36248	Dialysis, 49418-49419, 49421	Decompression, 63005, 63011-63012, 63017,	CD143 Antigens, 82164
Aorta, 36160-36215	Dialysis Circuit, 36901-36903	63047-63048, 63056-63057	
			CD4, 86360
Arterial	Electrode Array, 63650	Exploration, 63005, 63011, 63017	CD40LG, 81404
Aorta, 36200, 36221	Extremity Artery, 36140	Vertebral Corpectomy, 63087-63088	CD8, 86360
Translumbar, 36160	Fallopian Tube, 58345, 74742	Cauterization	CDH1, 81406, 81432, 81435
Arteriovenous Shunt	Gastrointestinal, 43241	Anus	CDH23, 81408, 81430
Dialysis Circuit, 36901-36903	Hepatic Vein, 37182-37183	Bleeding Control, 46614	CDKL5, 81405-81406, [81419]
Cutdown, 36625	Innominate Artery, 36222-36223, 36225	Destruction of Hemorrhoid(s), 46930	CDKN2A, 81404
Intracatheter/Needle, 36100-36140	Interstitial Radioelement Application	Fissure, 46940, 46942	CEA (Carcinoembryonic Antigen), 82378
Percutaneous, 36620	Breast, 19296-19298	Removal	C/EBP, 81218
Selective Placement, 36215-36218,	Genitalia, 55920	Polyp	CEBPA (CCAAT/enhancer binding protein [C/EBP],
36222-36252	Head, 41019	Multiple, 46612	alpha), 81218
Superselective Placement, 36253-36254	Lung, 31643	Single, 46610	Cecil Repair, 54318
Arteriovenous Shunt	Muscle, 20555	Tumor	Cecostomy
Dialysis Circuit, 36901-36903	Neck, 41019	Multiple, 46612	Contrast, 49465
Bile Duct	Pelvic Organs, 55920	Single, 46610	Laparoscopic, 44188
Change, 47535-47536	Prostate, 55875	Cervix, 57522	Obstructive Material Removal, 49460
Percutaneous, 47533-47534	Soft Tissue, 20555	Cryocautery, 57511	Radiological Evaluation, 49465
Removal, 47537	Intracranial Neuroendoscopy, 62160	Electro or Thermal, 57510	Skin Level, 44320
Bladder, 51045, 51102	Intraperitoneal Tunneled, 49324, 49421	Laser Ablation, 57513	Tube Imaging, 49465
Brachiocephalic Artery, 36215-36218	Jejunum	Chemical	Tube Insertion
Brain, 61210	for Enteral Therapy, 44015	Corneal Epithelium, 65435-65436	Open, 44300
Replacement, 62160, 62194, 62225	Legs, 36245-36248	Granulation Tissue, 17250	Percutaneous, 49442
Stereotactic, 64999	Nasotracheal, 31720	Colon	Tube Replacement, 49450
Bronchus	Nasotracheobronchi, 31720	Bleeding Control, 45334, 45382	with Colectomy, 44141
for Intracavitary Radioelement Applica-	Newborn	Removal Tumor, 45333, 45384	CEL, 81403
tion, 31643	Umbilical Vein, 36510	Cornea, 65450	Celestin Procedure, 43510
	,	1	,
with Bronchial Brush Biopsy, 31717	Pelvic Artery, 36245-36248	Ectropion, 67915	Celiac Plexus
Cardiac	Peripheral, 36568-36571 [36572, 36573], 36584	Entropion, 67922	Destruction, 64680
Combined Left and Right Heart, 93453,	Placement	Esophagus	Injection
93460-93461	Arterial Coronary Conduit without Left	Removal Tumor, 43216, 43250	Anesthetic, 64530
for Congenital Anomalies, 93596-	Heart Catheterization, 93455	Everted Punctum, 68705	Neurolytic, 64680
93597	Coronary Artery without Left Heart	Intrarenal Stricture, 52343, 52346	Celiac Trunk Artery
with Ventriculography, 93453,	Catheterization, 93455	Iris, 66155	See Artery, Celiac
93460-93461	Venous Coronary Bypass Graft without	Lacrimal Punctum Closure, 68760	Celioscopy
Flow Directed, 93503	Left Heart Catheterization, 93455	Lower Esophageal Sphincter	See Endoscopy, Peritoneum
Flow Measurement, 93571-93572	Pleural Cavity, 32550-32552	Thermal via Endoscopy, 43257	Celiotomy, 49000
for Angiography	Portal Vein, 36481, 37182-37183	Nasopharyngeal Hemorrhage, 42970	Cell
Bypass Graft(s), 93455, 93457,	Pressure Sensor, 33289	Nose	Blood
93459-93461	Pulmonary Artery, 36013-36015	Hemorrhage, 30901-30906	See Blood Cell
Congenital Heart, 93563-93564	Radioelement Application	Prostate Resection, 52601	Count
Coronary, 93454-93461, 93563	See Interstitial Radioelement Application		B Cells, 86355



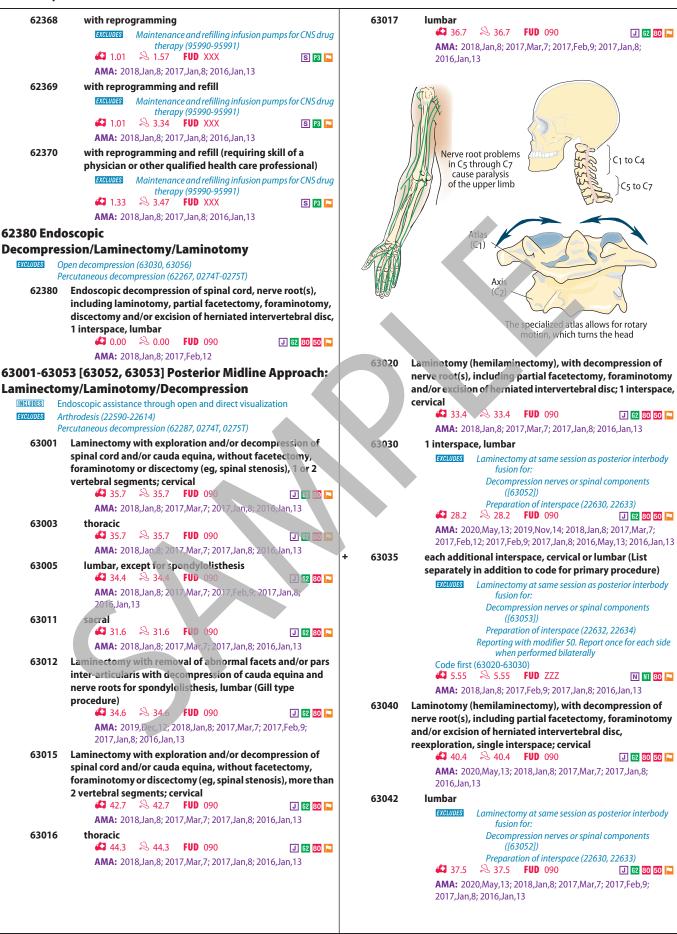
		1	Cardiovascular, nemic, and Lymphatic
33335	with cardiopulmonary bypass	33364	7.11
	△ 54.6 尽 54.6 FUD 090 □ 80 □		Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed (33367-33369)
	AMA: 2018,Jun,11; 2017,Dec,3		(33307-33309) 43 46.1 \gtrsim 46.1 FUD 000
	ure Left Atrial Appendage		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Dec,3; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Jan,13
EXCLUDES	ardiac catheterization except for reasons other than closure left atrial	33365	
Code also in	appendage (93451-93453, 93456, 93458-93461, 93462, 93593-93598) tracardiac echocardiography, if performed (93662)		mediastinotomy)
Code also tra	ansvascular ventricular support, when performed:		Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed
	ump (33967, 33968, 33970-33974) oreal membrane oxygenation (ECMO)/extracorporeal life support (ECLS)		(33367-33369) ♣ 51.8 \$ 51.8 FUD 000
	46-33949)		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Jan,13
Ventricula	ar assist device (33975-33983, [33995], 33990-33993 [33997])	33366	
33340	Percutaneous transcatheter closure of the left atrial	33300	Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed
	appendage with endocardial implant, including fluoroscopy,		(33367-33369)
	transseptal puncture, catheter placement(s), left atrial angiography, left atrial appendage angiography, when		4 45.7 ≥ 45.7 FUD 000 □ ■
	performed, and radiological supervision and		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Jan,13
	interpretation	+ 33367	
	4 22.9 ≈ 22.9 FUD 000		peripheral arterial and venous cannulation (eg, femoral
	AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jul,3		vessels) (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
33361-333	69 Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement		Excludes Cardiopulmonary bypass support with open or central
	2 Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR); 100-04,32,290.3 Claims Processing TAVR		arterial and venous cannulation (33368-33369)
Inpatient; 100-04,32	,290.4 Payment of TAVR for MA Plan Participants		Cerebral embolic protection device (33370)
	ccess and implantation aortic valve (33361-33366)		Code first (33361-33366, 33418, 33477, 0483T-0484T, 0544T,
	ccess sheath placement dvancement valve delivery system		0545T, [0643T], 0569T, 0570T, 0644T) 18.2 \$\infty\$ 18.2 FUD ZZZ
	rteriotomy closure		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Mar,5; 2016,Jan,13
	alloon aortic valvuloplasty	+ 33368	
	ardiac or open arterial approach eployment of valve		arterial and venous cannulation (eg, femoral, iliac, axillary
P	ercutaneous access		vessels) (List separately in addition to code for primary
R	adiology procedures: Angiography during and after procedure		procedure)
	Assessment access site for closure		EXCLUDES Cardiopulmonary bypass support with percutaneous
	Documentation intervention completion		or central arterial and venous cannulation (33367, 33369)
	Guidance for valve placement Supervision and interpretation		Code first (33361-33366, 33418, 33477, 0483T-0484T, 0544T,
T	emporary pacemaker		0545T, [0643T], 0569T, 0570T, 0644T)
	alve repositioning when necessary		□ 21.7
EXCLUDES	ardiac catheterization procedures included in TAVR/TAVI service (93452-93453, 93458-93461, 93567)		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Mar,5; 2016,Jan,13
	ercutaneous coronary interventional procedures	+ 33369	cardiopulmonary bypass support with central arterial and venous cannulation (eg, aorta, right atrium, pulmonary
	rdiac catheterization services for purposes other than TAVR/TAVI agnostic coronary angiography at different session from interventional		artery) (List separately in addition to code for primary
proced	ure		procedure)
Code also di	agnostic coronary angiography same time as TAVR/TAVI when: tudy available, but documentation states patient's condition has changed		EXCLUDES Cardiopulmonary bypass support with percutaneous
since	previous study, visualization anatomy/pathology inadequate, or change		or open arterial and venous cannulation
occu	rs during procedure warranting additional evaluation outside current		(33367-33368) Code first (33361-33366, 33418, 33477, 0483T-0484T, 0544T,
targe No previo	et area us catheter-based coronary angiography study available, and full		0545T, [0643T], 0569T-0570T, 0644T)
diag	nostic study performed, with decision to perform intervention based on		43 28.6 ≈ 28.6 FUD ZZZ © 80 ≥
	study		AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Mar,5; 2016,Jan,13
	odifier 59 when diagnostic coronary angiography procedures performed rate and distinct procedural services on same day or session as TAVR/TAVI	33370 Cer	rebral Embolic Protection Device
	odifier 62 as all TAVI/TAVR procedures require work two physicians	+ 33370	Transcatheter placement and subsequent removal of cerebral
	ansvascular ventricular support, when performed: ump (33967, 33970, 33973)		embolic protection device(s), including arterial access,
	ar assist device (33975-33976, [33995], 33990-33993 [33997])		catheterization, imaging, and radiological supervision and
33361	Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR/TAVI) with		interpretation, percutaneous (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
	prosthetic valve; percutaneous femoral artery approach		INCLUDES Angiography (75710)
	Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed (33367-33369)		Aortography (75600)
	43 39.4 ≥ 39.4 FUD 000 □ 100 □		Ultrasound guidance (76937)
	AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Jan,13		EXCLUDES Additional or multiple filter placement
33362	open femoral artery approach		Code first transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR/TAVI) (33361-33366)
	Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed		(33361-33366) (33361-33366) FUD 000
	(33367-33369) ♣ 43.1		
	AMA: 2018,Jan,8; 2017,Dec,3; 2017,Jan,8; 2016,Jan,13		
33363	open axillary artery approach		
33303	Code also cardiopulmonary bypass when performed		
	(33367-33369)		
	△ 44.6 ≥ 44.6 FUD 000 □ □		
	AMA: 2018, Jan, 8; 2017, Dec, 3; 2017, Jan, 8; 2016, Jan, 13		

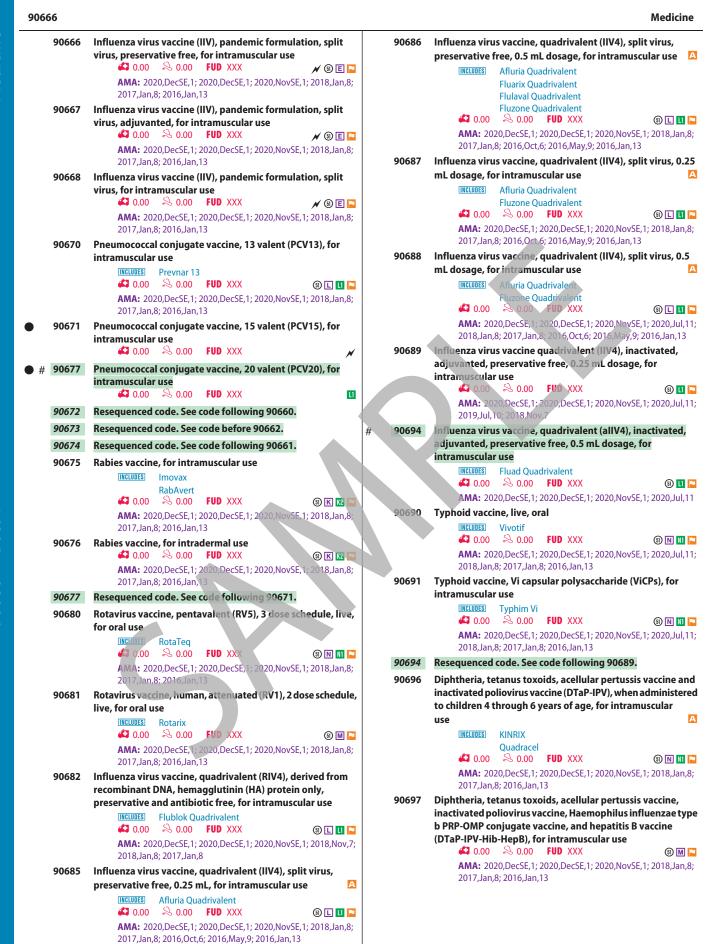




























Appendix A — Modifiers

CPT Modifiers

A modifier is a two-position alpha or numeric code appended to a CPT® code to clarify the services being billed. Modifiers provide a means by which a service can be altered without changing the procedure code. They add more information, such as the anatomical site, to the code. In addition, they help to eliminate the appearance of duplicate billing and unbundling. Modifiers are used to increase accuracy in reimbursement, coding consistency, editing, and to capture payment data.

- 22 Increased Procedural Services: When the work required to provide a service is substantially greater than typically required, it may be identified by adding modifier 22 to the usual procedure code. Documentation must support the substantial additional work and the reason for the additional work (ie, increased intensity, time, technical difficulty of procedure, severity of patient's condition, physical and mental effort required).
 - **Note:** This modifier should not be appended to an E/M service.
- 23 Unusual Anesthesia: Occasionally, a procedure, which usually requires either no anesthesia or local anesthesia, because of unusual circumstances must be done under general anesthesia. This circumstance may be reported by adding modifier 23 to the procedure code of the basic service.
- 24 Unrelated Evaluation and Management Service by the Same Physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional During a Postoperative Period: The physician or other qualified health care professional may need to indicate that an evaluation and management service was performed during a postoperative period for a reason(s) unrelated to the original procedure. This circumstance may be reported by adding modifier 24 to the appropriate level of E/M service.
- Significant, Separately Identifiable Evaluation and Management Service by the Same Physician or Other Qualified Health Care Professional on the Same Day of the Procedure or Other Service: It may be necessary to indicate that on the day a procedure or service identified by a CPT code was performed, the patient's condition required a significant, separately identifiable E/M service above and beyond the other service provided or beyond the usual preoperative and postoperative care associated with the procedure that was performed. A significant, separately identifiable E/M service is defined or substantiated by documentation that satisfies the relevant criteria for the respective E/M service to be reported (see Evaluation and Management Services Guidelines for instructions on determining level of E/M service). The E/M service may be prompted by the symptom or condition for which the procedure and/or service was provided. As such, different diagnoses are not required for reporting of the E/M services on the same date. This circumstance may be reported by adding modifier 25 to the appropriate level of E/M service. **Note:** This modifier is not used to report an E/M service that resulted in a decision to perform surgery. See modifier 57. For significant, separately identifiable non-E/M services, see modifier
- 26 Professional Component: Certain procedures are a combination of a physician or other qualified health care professional component and a technical component. When the physician or other qualified health care professional component is reported separately, the service may be identified by adding modifier 26 to the usual procedure number.
- **32 Mandated Services:** Services related to *mandated* consultation and/or related services (eg, third party payer, governmental, legislative or regulatory requirement) may be identified by adding modifier 32 to the basic procedure.
- 33 Preventive Services: When the primary purpose of the service is the delivery of an evidence based service in accordance with a US Preventive Services Task Force A or B rating in effect and other preventive services identified in preventive services mandates (legislative or regulatory), the service may be identified by adding 33 to the procedure. For separately reported services specifically identified as preventive, the modifier should not be used.

- 47 Anesthesia by Surgeon: Regional or general anesthesia provided by the surgeon may be reported by adding modifier 47 to the basic service. (This does not include local anesthesia.)
 Note: Modifier 47 would not be used as a modifier for the anesthesia procedures.
- 50 Bilateral Procedure: Unless otherwise identified in the listings, bilateral procedures that are performed at the same session should be identified by adding modifier 50 to the appropriate 5 digit code. Note: This modifier should not be appended to designated "add-on" codes (see Appendix F).
- 51 Multiple Procedures: When multiple procedures, other than E/M services, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation services or provision of supplies (eg, vaccines), are performed at the same session by the same individual, the primary procedure or service may be reported as listed. The additional procedure(s) or service(s) may be identified by appending modifier 51 to the additional procedure or service code(s).
 - **Note:** This modifier should not be appended to designated "add-on" codes (see Appendix F).
- **Reduced Services:** Under certain circumstances a service or procedure is partially reduced or eliminated at the discretion of the physician or other qualified health care professional. Under these circumstances the service provided can be identified by its usual procedure number and the addition of modifier 52, signifying that the service is reduced. This provides a means of reporting reduced services without disturbing the identification of the basic service. **Note:** For hospital outpatient reporting of a previously scheduled procedure/service that is partially reduced or cancelled as a result of extenuating circumstances or those that threaten the well-being of the patient prior to or after administration of anesthesia, see modifiers 73 and 74 (see modifiers approved for ASC hospital outpatient use).
- Discontinued Procedure: Under certain circumstances, the physician or other qualified health care professional may elect to terminate a surgical or diagnostic procedure. Due to extenuating circumstances or those that threaten the well being of the patient, it may be necessary to indicate that a surgical or diagnostic procedure was started but discontinued. This circumstance may be reported by adding modifier 53 to the code reported by the physician for the discontinued procedure.
 - **Note:** This modifier is not used to report the elective cancellation of a procedure prior to the patient's anesthesia induction and/or surgical preparation in the operating suite. For outpatient hospital/ambulatory surgery center (ASC) reporting of a previously scheduled procedure/service that is partially reduced or cancelled as a result of extenuating circumstances or those that threaten the well being of the patient prior to or after administration of anesthesia, see modifiers 73 and 74 (see modifiers approved for ASC hospital outpatient use).
- 54 Surgical Care Only: When 1 physician or other qualified health care professional performs a surgical procedure and another provides preoperative and/or postoperative management, surgical services may be identified by adding modifier 54 to the usual procedure number.
- Postoperative Management Only: When 1 physician or other qualified health care professional performed the postoperative management and another performed the surgical procedure, the postoperative component may be identified by adding modifier 55 to the usual procedure number.
- Preoperative Management Only: When 1 physician or other qualified health care professional performed the preoperative care and evaluation and another performed the surgical procedure, the preoperative component may be identified by adding modifier 56 to the usual procedure number.
- 57 Decision for Surgery: An evaluation and management service that resulted in the initial decision to perform the surgery may be identified by adding modifier 57 to the appropriate level of E/M service.

Appendix C — Evaluation and Management Extended Guidelines

This appendix provides an overview of evaluation and management (E/M) services, tables that identify the documentation elements associated with each code, the 2021 changes to some E/M services, and the federal documentation guidelines with emphasis on the 1997 exam guidelines. The 1997 version identifies both general multi-system physical examinations and single-system examinations, but providers may also use the original 1995 version of the E/M guidelines; both are currently supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for audit purposes when reporting 99217–99499.

The levels of E/M services define the wide variations in skill, effort, and time and are required for preventing and/or diagnosing and treating illness or injury, and promoting optimal health. These codes are intended to represent physician work, and because much of this work involves the amount of training, experience, expertise, and knowledge that a provider may employ when treating a given patient, the true indications of the level of this work may be difficult to recognize without some explanation.

Providers

The AMA advises coders that while a particular service or procedure may be assigned to a specific section, the service or procedure itself is not limited to use only by that specialty group (see paragraphs 2 and 3 under "Instructions for Use of the CPT" Codebook" on page xiv of the AMA CPT book). Additionally, the procedures and services listed throughout the book are for use by any qualified physician or other qualified health care professional or entity (e.g., hospitals, laboratories, or home health agencies).

The use of the phrase "physician or other qualified health care professional" (OQHCP) was adopted to identify a health care provider other than a physician. This type of provider is further described in CPT as an individual "qualified by education, training, licensure/regulation (when applicable), and facility privileging (when applicable)." State licensure guidelines determine the scope of practice and an OQHCP must practice within these guidelines, even if more restrictive than the CPT guidelines. The OQHCP may report services independently or under incident-to guidelines. The professionals within this definition are separate from "clinical staff" and are able to practice independently. CPT defines clinical staff as "a person who works under the supervision of a physician or OQHCP and who is allowed, by law, regulation, and facility policy to perform or assist in the performance of a specified professional service, but who does not individually report that professional service." Keep in mind that there may be other policies or guidance that can affect who may report a specific service.

Types of E/M Services

When approaching E/M, the first choice that a provider must make is what type of code to use. The following tables outline the E/M codes for different levels of care for:

- Office or other outpatient services—new patient
- Office or other outpatient services—established patient
- · Hospital observation services—initial care, subsequent, and discharge
- Hospital inpatient services—initial care, subsequent, and discharge
- Observation or inpatient care (including admission and discharge services)
- · Consultations—office or other outpatient
- · Consultations—inpatient
- · Emergency department services
- Critical care
- Nursing facility—initial services
- · Nursing facility—subsequent services
- · Nursing facility—discharge and annual assessment
- Domiciliary, rest home, or custodial care—new patient
- Domiciliary, rest home, or custodial care—established patient
- · Home services—new patient
- Home services—established patient

- Newborn care services
- Neonatal and pediatric interfacility transport
- Neonatal and pediatric critical care—inpatient
- · Neonate and infant intensive care services—initial and continuing
- · Care management

The specifics of the code components that determine code selection are listed in the table and discussed in the next section. Before a level of service is decided upon, the correct type of service is identified.

A new patient is a patient who has not received any face-to-face professional services from the physician or OQHCP within the past three years. An established patient is a patient who has received face-to-face professional services from the physician or OQHCP within the past three years. In the case of group practices, if a physician or OQHCP of the exact same specialty or subspecialty has seen the patient within three years, the patient is considered established.

If a physician or OQHCP is on call or covering for another physician or OQHCP, the patient's encounter is classified as it would have been by the physician or OQHCP who is not available. Thus, a locum tenens physician or OQHCP who sees a patient on behalf of the patient's attending physician or OQHCP may not bill a new patient code unless the attending physician or OQHCP has not seen the patient for any problem within three years.

Office or other outpatient services are E/M services provided in the physician or OQHCP office, the outpatient area, or other ambulatory facility. Until the patient is admitted to a health care facility, he/she is considered to be an outpatient. Hospital observation services are E/M services provided to patients who are designated or admitted as "observation status" in a hospital.

Codes 99218-99220 are used to indicate initial observation care. These codes include the initiation of the observation status, supervision of patient care including writing orders, and the performance of periodic reassessments. These codes are used only by the provider "admitting" the patient for observation.

Codes 99234-99236 are used to indicate evaluation and management services to a patient who is admitted to and discharged from observation status or hospital inpatient on the same day. If the patient is admitted as an inpatient from observation on the same day, use the appropriate level of Initial Hospital Care (99221-99223).

Code 99217 indicates discharge from observation status. It includes the final physical examination of the patient, instructions, and preparation of the discharge records. It should not be used when admission and discharge are on the same date of service. As mentioned above, report codes 99234-99236 to appropriately describe same day observation services.

If a patient is in observation longer than one day, subsequent observation care codes 99224-99226 should be reported. If the patient is discharged on the second day, observation discharge code 99217 should be reported. If the patient status is changed to inpatient on a subsequent date, the appropriate inpatient code, 99221-99233, should be reported.

Initial hospital care is defined as E/M services provided during the first hospital inpatient encounter with the patient by the admitting provider. (If a physician other than the admitting physician performs the initial inpatient encounter, refer to consultations or subsequent hospital care in the CPT book.) Subsequent hospital care includes all follow-up encounters with the patient by all physicians or OQHCP. As there may only be one admitting physician, HCPCS Level II modifier AI Principal physician of record, should be appended to the initial hospital care code by the attending physician or OQHCP.

A consultation is the provision of a physician or OQHCP's opinion or advice about a patient for a specific problem at the request of another physician or other appropriate source. CPT also states that a consultation may be performed when a physician or OQHCP is determining whether to accept the transfer of patient care at the request of another physician or