

Tendon Sheath Injections

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Coding Update:Tendon Sheath Injections

In this article, we will focus on codes for injection(s) of a tendon sheath ligament (20550) and injection(s) of tendon origin/insertion (20551). Although the parent code (20550), indicates, "Injection(s)," codes 20550 and 20551 should be reported one time for multiple or single injections to a single tendon sheath, ligament, tendon origin, or tendon insertion performed. Thus, multiple injections to the same tendon sheaths, tendon origins, tendon insertion, or ligaments would be reported one time only, while injections to multiple tendon sheaths, tendon origins, tendon insertion, or ligaments are reported one time for each injection.

Example of Intra-service Work Associated With Code 20550

A 1.5-in, 25- or 22-gauge needle is inserted into the acromioclavicular ligament. The needle is advanced a distance of about 1 to 3 cm. The injection is given after aspiration is negative for blood. The solution is typically a 3-cc mixture of a 2:1 ratio of anesthetic and corticosteroid respectively. Post procedure the injection area is cleansed and a bandage is applied to the site.

Example of Intra-service Work Associated With Code 20551

The affected tendon(s) is identified by palpation. A 1.5-in, 25- or 22-gauge needle is inserted alongside the tendon at an oblique angle of approximately 30°. The needle is advanced a short distance, about 1 or 2 cm, observing for any complaints of paresthesia (in this case the superficial radial nerve as it crosses the extensor pollicis brevis tendon) or pain in a nearby peripheral nerve distribution. If any complaints are encountered the needle is slightly withdrawn until the complaints stop. After aspiration is negative for blood, the injectant solution is injected slowly along the affected tendon(s). The solution is a mixture of 1 cc of anesthetic with 1 cc of corticosteroid. Typically a 1- to 2-cc volume of the injectant solution is used to perform the injection. Post procedure the injection area is cleansed and a bandage is applied to the site.

It is important to note that codes 20550 and 20551 are not intended for "dry needling." Dry needling techniques should be reported with the unlisted procedure code 20999, *Unlisted*

procedure, musculoskeletal system, general. 
