

Dermatology Coding Alert

Clip and Save: Make Your E/M Visit Documentation a Snap

If you want to nail the correct E/M code every time, the template below, created by our experts for dermatology practices, includes all the essentials for perfect documentation.

Single Organ System Exam Integumentary

Constitutional

1. The physician measures any three of the following seven components:

Vital signs:

1. sitting or standing blood pressure
 2. supine blood pressure
 3. pulse rate and regularity
 4. respiration
 5. temperature
 6. height
 7. weight (may be measured and recorded by ancillary staff)
2. General appearance of patient (e.g., development, nutrition, body habitus, deformities, attention to grooming).

Exam

3. Palpation of scalp and inspection of hair of scalp, eyebrows, face, chest, pubic area (when indicated) and extremities
4. Inspection and/or palpation of skin and subcutaneous tissue (e.g., rashes, lesions, ulcers, susceptibility to and presence of photo damage) in four of the following five areas:
 1. head and neck
 2. chest, breasts and back
 3. abdomen
 4. genitalia
 5. extremities

Don't miss: For the comprehensive level, the examination of at least eight anatomic areas must be performed and documented. For the three lower levels of examination, each body area is counted separately. For example, inspection and/or palpation of the skin and subcutaneous tissues of the head and neck and extremities constitutes two areas, such as: inspection for eccrine and apocrine glands of skin and subcutaneous tissue with identification and location of any hyperhidrosis, chromhidrosis or bromidrosis.

Note: CMS explains this template (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medlearn/master1.pdf>) to help you confirm that your documentation meets the criteria to code your E/M services to the highest and most appropriate level.

