

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Add Sites Together for Correct Debridement Coding

Question: A patient came to our dermatology practice with infected decubiti on two sites that needed debridement. Can I bill each site separately, and which codes should I bill?

Maryland Subscriber

Answer: You should report 11000 (Debridement of extensive eczematous or infected skin; up to 10% of body surface). You cannot report the sites separately because this code specifies a certain percentage of body surface. In the case you describe, you should add the area of the two sites together to get the appropriate percentage. Based on that summed area, you can report +11001 (... each additional 10% of the body surface [list separately in addition to code for primary procedure]) if the dermatologist excised a total area greater than 10 percent.

Remember: This code is an add-on code, and you can only report it with 11000. If the infected decubiti extend deeper than just the skin or if debridement involved more than just the skin, you might report a code from the 11040-11044 series (Debridement; skin, partial/full thickness, subcutaneous tissue, muscle and bone).