

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Question: Play by the Rules When Billing for Dermabrasion

Question: How should I code for dermabrasion and get reimbursed?

Virginia Subscriber

Answer: Coding for dermabrasion is based on the location and the size of the area. A powered rotary instrument is used to "sand down" or smooth scarred or wrinkled areas. This procedure lowers raised lesions or thins tissue to regenerate skin with a smoother appearance.

Use code 15780 (Dermabrasion; total face [e.g., for acne scarring, fine wrinkling, rhytids, general keratosis]) for the total face, 15781 (... segmental, face) for a segment of the face, and 15782 (... regional, other than face) for regional dermabrasion of an area other than the face. Use 15783 (... superficial, any site [e.g., tattoo removal]) for a superficial site, such as a tattoo.

Note: An assistant-at-surgeon fee is payable with 15780 but requires documentation. These codes have 90 days of follow-up care. If the dermatologist provides additional services within those 90 days, you will need modifiers to get those services paid.

- Answers to You Be the Coder and Reader Questions were reviewed by **Linda Howrey, BS, CCS-P**, Howrey and Associates in Princeton, Mass.