

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Look to 17000 for Plantar Wart Cryotherapy

Question: Which code should I use for cryotherapy treatment of a common or plantar wart on the skin - 17000 or 17110? Do the coding rules change if we send the samples to a pathologist?

Georgia Subscriber

Answer: Although 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], of flat warts, molluscum contagiosum, or milia; up to 14 lesions) includes the word \"warts\" in the descriptor, you should not report this code in your case.

In fact, in a parenthetical instruction after 17111, CPT states, \"For destruction of common or plantar warts, see 17000, 17003, 17004.\"

Accordingly, you should report 17000 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], all benign or premalignant lesions [e.g., actinic keratoses] other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; first lesion) when the dermatologist destroys a common or plantar wart. If the dermatologist destroys two to 14 such warts during a given encounter, you should report 17000 for destruction of the first wart and 17003 for each wart thereafter, up to 14. If the physician destroys 15 or more, you should code only 17004 once.

If you send the samples to a pathologist, your coding remains the same.