

Dermatology Coding Alert

READER QUESTIONS: Stick to 17110 Even With Histofreezer

Question: If the doctor performs 17110 and uses histofreezer for the procedure, can I bill for the supply?

What code should I use for it?

Alaska Subscriber

Answer: No. You don't bill for the supply. Simply report 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions).

Do this: Report the destruction of all benign lesions that are medically necessary by using any one in the series 17110-17111. You will find these codes most commonly linked to 702.11 (Inflamed seborrheic keratosis) and 078.10 (Viral warts, unspecified), which includes common warts (verruca vulgaris). However, you'll also find that you'll occasionally report 17110-17111 with 216.x (Benign neoplasm of skin) and 238.2 (Neoplasm of uncertain behavior of other and unspecified sites and tissues; skin). Always check your physician's documentation for the appropriate diagnosis.

Background: Histofreezer is a cryosurgical device that combines the effectiveness of traditional cryosurgery with the convenience of an aerosol based delivery system. For the first time in medical history, cryosurgery can now be performed without the need for expensive equipment. (Note: Practices used an aerosol-based delivery system in 1978).