

Dermatology Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Suture Removal - to Bill or Not?

Question: During a follow-up visit for a lesion removal at the office, the dermatologist removed several sutures from the patient's hand. Can we charge separately for the suture removal?

Massachusetts Subscriber

Answer: No, you can't charge for suture removal. If your dermatologist placed the sutures in the first place, suture removal is included as a part of the global package of the primary procedure.

If your dermatologist did not place the sutures, you may consider the removal as a component of any E/M service the dermatologist provides on the same date. In such a case, you should use ICD-9 code V58.3 (Attention to surgical dressings and sutures) as a secondary diagnosis.