

Dermatology Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: Multiple Arm Lesions

Question: Our dermatologist removed three actinic keratoses from a patient's left arm. Should we code the removal with 17000 and 17003 with a modifier, or should we report 17000 and then 17003 twice?

West Virginia Subscriber

Answer: You should not append any modifiers to +17003 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrocautery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettage], premalignant lesions [e.g., actinic keratoses]; second through 14 lesions, each [List separately in addition to code for first lesion]).

Code +17003 is an add-on code you use in conjunction with 17000 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrocautery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettage], premalignant lesions [e.g., actinic keratoses]; first lesion).

Example: The dermatologist removes four actinic keratoses from a patient's left foot. You would code the procedure with 17000 and 17003 x three units.