

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Dig Out Ring-Removal Payment With 10121

Question: How should we code the removal of a belly-button ring that's infected and embedded into the patient's belly button?

Arkansas Subscriber

Answer: Depending on various factors, you should use either 10120 (Incision and removal of foreign body, subcutaneous tissues; simple) or 10121 (... complicated). If the skin is infected and requires your internist to drain and provide extensive repair, you may assign 10121. This code represents a complicated removal.

Make sure your internist documents why the procedure required extensive work. For instance, the medical record may document the physician's drainage and repair services.