

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Eye Injury Requires Fluorescein Staining

Question: When we see a patient for an eye injury and use fluorescein staining, is there a specific code we can use in addition to the E/M code? I found several fluorescein codes in the ophthalmology section, but they sound like much larger procedures than our doctor performs.

Alabama Subscriber

Answer: Fluorescein staining involves using an orange dye (fluorescein) and a special light to detect foreign bodies in the eye or damage to the corneal surface. You are correct that the fluorescein codes in CPT's Special Ophthalmological Services section (92230, 92235 and 92287) are for more complex procedures than the internist performs in the office. Unfortunately, there is no additional code in CPT for fluorescein staining. It is included in the E/M service you provided.