

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Question: Multiple Visits During Global Period

Question: We performed an I&D on a sebaceous cyst and used CPT code 10060. This code has a 10-day postoperative period. But the patient had to return every two days to have the site repacked, for a total of five postprocedure visits. Are these five visits included in the global? Should we have used a different code?

Alabama Subscriber

Answer: Yes, most carriers consider these visits part of the global package. Though CPT's definition of the global surgical package does not include visits to treat complications resulting from a minor surgical procedure, most payers follow Medicare's not CPT's global surgical package guidelines. Medicare states that all visits related to the surgical procedure are covered during the global period.

CPT 10060* (Incision and drainage of abscess [e.g., carbuncle, suppurative hidradenitis, cutaneous or subcutaneous abscess, cyst, furuncle, or paronychia]; simple or single) sounds like the appropriate code based on your brief description of the procedure. You would select another code only if it more accurately describes the procedure performed, not because it has a different global period.

Answers to You Be The Coder and Reader Questions were provided by **Kathy Pride, CPC, CCS-P, HIM**, applications specialist with QuadraMed, a national healthcare information technology and consulting firm in San Rafael, Calif.; and **Judy Richardson, RN, MSA, CCS-P**, a senior consultant at Hill and Associates, a coding and compliance consulting firm in Wilmington, N.C.