

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

READER QUESTIONS: 99173 Handles Vision Screening In Office

Question: How should I code for a vision screening of both eyes which is performed in our office?

Michigan Subscriber

Answer: Use 99173 (Screening test of visual acuity, quantitative, bilateral). The CPT manual indicates that the screening test used must employ graduated visual acuity stimuli that allow a quantitative estimate of visual acuity (e.g., Snellen chart).

Other identifiable services unrelated to this screening test provided at the same time may be reported separately, such as preventive medicine services. When acuity is measured as part of a general ophthalmological service or of an E/M service of the eye, it's a diagnostic examination, not a screening test. You may report 99173 in addition to the preventive medicine service, when performed, per CPT.

Catch: This procedure is not covered by Medicare.

-- Answers to You Be the Coder and Reader Questions were reviewed by **Bruce Rappoport, MD, CPC, CHCC**, a board-certified internist and medical director of Broward Health's Best Choice Plus and Total Claims Administration in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.