

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Choose Either 17110 or 17111 for Removal, Not Both Codes

Question: The physician removed plantar warts from each of a patient's feet. Do I submit the claim with right/left location modifiers?

West Virginia Subscriber

Answer: You shouldn't need to include modifiers such as LT (Left side) or RT (Right side). Instead, count the number of lesions removed and submit either 17110 (Destruction [e.g., laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement], of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular proliferative lesions; up to 14 lesions) or 17111 (...15 or more lesions).

Explanation: The code descriptors specify the total number of lesions removed but don't distinguish between body areas. Therefore, the lesions included in your code count can be from multiple anatomic sites.

Remember: Note that 17111 is not an add-on code, so you shouldn't report 17110 and 17111 on the same claim. This "either/or" code selection differs from similar code families such as destruction codes 17000-17004 that have a "single lesion" code and associated add-on codes.