

## Internal Medicine Coding Alert

### Reader Questions: Correct Coding for Epinephrine Injection

**Question:** An established patient of ours came in the office following a bee sting, to which he has an allergy. The patient was evaluated by the doctor and given an injection of epinephrine, subcutaneous 0.5 cc. What is the proper procedure code for the epinephrine injection, a J code or a code in the 95115-95199 (allergen immunotherapy) range?

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**Answer:** The 95115-99199 codes are not appropriate because the shot was given as treatment, not as immunotherapy. CPT defines immunotherapy (desensitization, hyposensitization) as the parenteral administration of allergenic extracts as antigens at periodic intervals, usually on an increasing dosage scale to a dosage which is maintained as maintenance therapy.

The correct code would be code J0170 for the injection, says **Garnet Dunston, CPC, MPC**, the national secretary of the American Academy of Procedural Coders. You should use code J0170 up to one milliliter. If it was over one milliliter, it would be this code times two.

You can also bill 90782 for the subcutaneous or intramuscular administration of an injection, but, according to Medicare guidelines, only the code for the drug (J0170) would be paid, she explains.

Giving the shot, according to Medicare guidelines, is included in the office visit. The medication should be billed using the J code.