

## Internal Medicine Coding Alert

### READER QUESTIONS: Dermabond/Suture Combo Calls for Wound Care Code

**Question:** An established Medicare patient reports to the internist after falling from the stairs on his front porch. He has a laceration on his lower right arm and is complaining of a headache. The internist cleans the wound and makes a layered closure of 2.7 cm on the patient's arm, using sutures and Dermabond to close the wound. The internist then performs a problem-focused history and examination on the patient to address his headaches. Can I report the Dermabond repair code in this scenario?

Missouri Subscriber

**Answer:** You should not include the Medicare code for Dermabond repair (G0168, Wound closure utilizing tissue adhesive[s] only) in this scenario.

Why? If your internist uses sutures or staples and Dermabond to close a laceration repair site, you can report only the layered laceration repair code, and you should not report G0168.

On your claim,

- report 12032 (Layer closure of wounds of scalp, axillae, trunk and/or extremities [excluding hands and feet]; 2.6 cm to 7.5 cm) for the laceration repair.
- attach 913.0 (Superficial injury of elbow, forearm and wrist; abrasion or friction burn without mention of infection) to 12032 to represent the patient's arm injury.
- attach E880.9 (Fall on or from other stairs or steps) to 12032 to represent the cause of the patient's arm injury.
- report 99212 (Office or other outpatient visit for the evaluation and management of an established patient, which requires at least two of these three key components: a problem-focused history; a problem-focused examination; straightforward medical decision-making) for the E/M service.
- append modifier 25 (Significant, separately identifiable evaluation and management service by the same physician on the same day of the procedure or other service) to 99212 to show that the E/M service and the repair were separate.
- link 784.0 (Headache) to 99212 to represent the patient's headache.
- link E880.9 to 99212 to represent the cause of the patient's headache.