

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Don't Get Stuck With the Wrong CPT Code

Question: My internist removed a piece of cotton stuck in a patient's ear. How should I code this?

Idaho Subscriber

Answer: Assuming that the cotton was lodged in the external ear, you can report 69200 (Removal foreign body from external auditory canal; without general anesthesia).

If the physician removed cotton from both ears, you must report both removals because 69200 is a unilateral code. To code for both ears, report 69200-LT (Left side) and 69200-RT (Right side), and append modifier 59 (Distinct procedural service) to the second code to show that you've provided two separate foreign-body removals.