

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Questions: Look for Bleb Infection Codes in 2007

Question: A therapeutic optometrist in our office heard that there would be some new diagnosis codes for infections in the eye. Is that true? What are they?

Nevada Subscriber

Answer: The 2007 ICD-9 manual will contain four new codes for blebitis, a postoperative bleb inflammation or infection. The new codes describe the progressive stages of the inflammation:

- 379.60 -- Inflammation (infection) of postprocedural bleb, unspecified
- 379.61 -- Inflammation (infection) of postprocedural bleb, stage 1
- 379.62 -- Inflammation (infection) of postprocedural bleb, stage 2
- 379.63 -- Inflammation (infection) of postprocedural bleb, stage 3.

A stage 1 infection is marked by bleb purulence with or without a mild anterior segment inflammation. Stage 2 includes bleb purulence and moderate anterior segment inflammation. Stage 3, which is indicated by marked anterior chamber reaction, vitritis and severe pain, may lead to bleb-related endophthalmitis and acute visual loss.

Bleb infections can occur up to three years after a patient has had a surgical trabeculectomy with insertion of a filtering bleb. Optometrists can treat early-stage inflammations with topical medications.