

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Reader Question: Determine Tissue Infection Diagnosis

Question: Our physician treated a soft-tissue infection on a patient's finger. Which diagnosis code should we report for this?

Answer: The answer depends on the type of infection. If the physician describes cellulitis to the finger, you should report one of the following codes: 681.00 (Cellulitis and abscess of finger and toe; finger; unspecified), 681.01 (... felon), 681.02 (... Onychia and paronychia of finger), 727.05 (Other tenosynovitis of hand and wrist), or 041.x (Bacterial infection in conditions classified elsewhere and of unspecified site).

If the doctor is treating an infection to soft tissue other than the skin, you could report 728.89 (Other disorders of muscle, ligament, and fascia; other).

And, if the infection is of unknown origin or cannot be classified into these categories, you might consider 686.9 (Unspecified local infection of skin and subcutaneous tissue).

Ideally, the doctor should be specifying the location and type of infection in the coding and documentation.