

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Follow Drug Dosing Rules to Pick Correct 'J' Code

Question: Depo-Medrol comes in three different strengths, but the code doesn't state how much is considered a dose. How do we convert dosages when reporting Depo-Medrol or other medications?

Answer: Depo-Medrol comes in three strengths: 20 mg/mL, 40 mg/mL, and 80 mg/mL. Packaging is available in 1 mL, 5 mL, and 10 mL volume vials and can be single dose (without any preservative) or multi-dose (with preservative) vials. HCPCS includes three Depo-Medrol codes to cover the different strengths:

- J1020 -- Injection, methylprednisolone acetate, 20 mg
- J1030 -- Injection, methylprednisolone acetate, 40 mg
- J1040 -- Injection, methylprednisolone acetate, 80 mg.

Conversion: First be aware that there is no difference between 1 mL and 1 cc. They are terms describing the volume of medication injected and are used interchangeably. Consider these examples:

- 1 mL of 40 mg/mL equals 40 mg of the steroid, which leads to billing 1 unit of J1030
- 0.5 cc of 40 mg/mL equals 20 mg Depo-Medrol, or code 1 unit of J1020
- 2 cc of 40 mg/mL equals 80 mg of Depo-Medrol or 1 unit of J1040.