

Eli's Rehab Report

Reader Question: J Codes for Corticosteroids

Question: Is there a J code for Depo-Medrol? I recently heard that corticosteroids are reimbursable, and I need the HCPCS Code for this before I can bill the code.

New Mexico Subscriber

Answer: Depo-Medrol and other corticosteroids are used by physiatrists to provide relief for inflamed areas of the body and to lessen swelling. For instance, a patient suffering from rotator cuff tendinitis (726.0-726.10) might receive a bursa injection into the shoulder (20605, arthrocentesis, aspiration and/or injection; intermediate joint, bursa or ganglion cyst) to relieve the symptoms and reduce the pain. Many PM&R practices use corticosteroids to treat arthritis patients.

HCPCS has three codes for Depo-Medrol (methylprednisolone acetate):

J1020 -- injection, 20 mg
J1030 -- injection, 40 mg
J1040 -- injection, 80 mg.

Medicare will allow you to bill for the drug and the administration procedure if you don't perform any other services at the time of the visit (and if the injection meets the criteria of allowable ICD-9 codes for the CPT code).

If you are billing private insurers for therapeutic injections, you should ask whether the insurer allows you to bill for the injection in addition to the drug. Many private insurance carriers accept J codes, but this is a carrier-specific billing policy and should be individually verified with the carriers you bill most frequently.