

## Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

### Reader Question: Code Stitching Spine Using Scoliosis Series

**Question:** Is there a code I should use to report a "stitching spine" series for examination of scoliosis?

Oregon Subscriber

**Answer:** While the term "stitching spine" may be unfamiliar to you, the process of obtaining multiple X-ray images for a scoliosis study is probably not. The only difference between examining each X-ray view individually and the stitching spine series is that with the stitching spine series of X-rays, the X-rays are combined to create a singular, high-resolution image. This provides the radiologist with a more comprehensive look than if they were to evaluate each spinal X-ray individually.

**Coder's note:** Stitching is actually a generalized radiological term - unrelated to the spine itself. Stitching can be performed on various anatomic sites. It is not exclusive to scoliosis imaging.

The dictation report should document exactly how many views of the spine the radiologist obtained in creating the comprehensive stitching spine view. Once you've got the number of views, you'll then choose one of the following scoliosis study codes:

- 72082 (Radiologic examination, spine, entire thoracic and lumbar, including skull, cervical and sacral spine if performed (eg, scoliosis evaluation); 2 or 3 views)
- 72083 (... 4 or 5 views)
- 72084 (...minimum of 6 views).

You'll immediately rule out 72081 (...one view) since a stitching spine series requires, at the very minimum (but usually more), two views.