

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

Reader Question: Compare Services to Count Synovectomy Compartments

Question: Our physician completed a medial meniscectomy along with medial and lateral synovectomies. How do we code this service?

Florida Subscriber

Answer: Although this is technically a two compartment synovectomy, in your case the medial synovectomy is included in the code for the medial meniscectomy. Therefore, you can report only a single compartment synovectomy using 29875 (Arthroscopy, knee, surgical; synovectomy, limited [e.g., plica or shelf resection] [separate procedure]).

Reporting meniscectomy and chondroplasty is easy. You either report 29880 (Arthroscopy, knee, surgical; with meniscectomy [medial AND lateral, including any meniscal shaving] ...) or 29877 (... debridement/shaving of articular cartilage [chondroplasty]).

Filing synovectomy claims sometimes becomes a challenge. CPT® 2016 includes two code choices for synovectomy: 29875 for one compartment and 29876 (... synovectomy, major, two or more compartments [e.g., medial or lateral]) for two or more compartments.

Remember: As synovectomy is often performed in conjunction with other procedures, you always check the codes of the other procedures and understand their scope before you code separately for synovectomy.