

Outpatient Facility Coding Alert

You Be the Coder: Making the Choice for Rhytidectomy

Question: One of the dermatologists at our center removed excess skin from a patient's neck. Is this a billable procedure? If so, how should I report it?

Montana Subscriber

Answer: Yes, this is a billable procedure, but payment may be another issue. The procedure you describe is referred to as rhytidectomy or the "elimination of wrinkles from, or reshaping of, the face, by excising any excess skin and tightening the remainder," according to Stedman's Concise Medical Dictionary.

You should code this procedure using 15825 (Rhytidectomy: neck with platysmal tightening [platysmal flap, P-flap]) if the dermatologist also completed platysmal tightening. If the dermatologist did not complete platysmal tightening, you should report 15828 (Rhytidectomy; cheek, chin and neck), and append modifier 52 for reduced services.