

OASIS Alert

Reader Question: DOES AFTERCARE DEPEND ON WHO IS DOING IT?

Q: Can we use aftercare V codes for therapists or are they only used for nurses?

A: For both, experts agree. Focus on the patient, not the clinician, says **Linda Krulish** with **Home Therapy Services**. Aftercare V codes can be used for both, agrees consultant **Pat Sevast** with **American Express Tax and Business Services** in Timonium, MD. Focus on finding the code that best describes the major focus of the care plan -- taking all disciplines into consideration, she says. You may need to use the aftercare code to give you a better picture of the overall plan and follow it with more specific codes.

Example: Look at two patients who both had joint replacement surgery and are admitted for home care, Sevast suggests. Patient A has a plan of care that focuses mainly on therapy, with a small amount of wound care, to be done by the PT. Here the primary code is likely to be V57.1 (Other physical therapy), followed by 781.2 (Gait abnormality), followed by V54.81 (Aftercare following joint replacement).

Patient B has an open incision and nursing will be making the most visits, with PT also involved for therapy. Here the primary diagnosis might be V54.81 (Aftercare following joint replacement), followed by V58.3 (Attention to sutures and dressings), followed by V57.1 (Other physical therapy).