

## Pain Management Coding Alert

### Reader question: 'Unlisted' Is Your Best Choice for Spinal Hardware Injection

**Question:** How do we code for the spinal hardware injections?

Kentucky Subscriber

**Answer:** Your physician is likely performing a "hardware injection" or "pedicle screw block" when he is injecting a local anesthetic alongside the vertebral pedicle screws previously placed during spinal instrumentation surgery.

**Explanation:** If the patient continues to experience pain after spinal fusion with hardware placement, the physician may inject an anesthetic as a diagnostic injection to determine if the hardware is the source of the patient's pain. Currently, there is no specific code for hardware injection. You should report 64999 (Unlisted procedure, nervous system), with a maximum of 1 unit of service regardless of the number of injections performed.