



UEI Coding Alert # 26 April 19, 2006

Two Tips for Extended Ophthalmoscopy (EO) Coding (CPT 92225 & 92226)

Because doctors usually perform some form of ophthalmoscopy during a general exam, knowing when it's appropriate to report extended ophthalmoscopy (EO) can be difficult. It's up to the doctor to prove that an extended ophthalmoscopy is medically necessary.

Tip 1: Distinguish 'Extended' From 'Routine'

General ophthalmological exams (92002-92014) already include routine ophthalmoscopy. You should not report routine ophthalmoscopy (which can include a slit lamp examination with a retinal lens or direct ophthalmoscopy for fundus examination) separately with 92002-92014 or an E/M code.

When an initial exam uncovers a serious retinal problem, doctors then turn to extended ophthalmoscopy (92225, *Ophthalmoscopy, extended, with retinal drawing, with interpretation and report; initial; and 92226, ... subsequent*) for a more detailed examination. A reimbursable EO is one that generates information the doctor could not have attained through other means (such as a view of the peripheral retina obtained only by scleral depression).

In general, extended ophthalmoscopies are warranted in cases of serious retinal disorders (e.g., retinal detachment) that constitute medical necessity, and they require detailed documentation that includes documenting time with lenses. Some glaucoma specialists may also perform EO to evaluate the optic nerve.

Tip 2: When Billed Bilaterally

Unlike most of the ophthalmic services in the 92xxx family, EO is inherently unilateral, and assumes that the procedure includes the examination of one eye only.

When the doctor performs EO bilaterally, you must prove medical necessity for both eyes. If there is a problem in one eye, don't assume the other eye has the same diagnosis (although it often does). You must report ICD-9 codes showing medical necessity for each eye--although they do not have to be different for each eye. Remember to use modifiers "RT" and "LT" to indicate which eye the procedure was performed on.