



Ontario



Education and Prevention Committee Interpretive Bulletin

Volume 6, No. 2

Wound Care — Insertion of Closed Irrigation System

Introduction

What is the Education and Prevention Committee (EPC)?

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) have jointly established the Education and Prevention Committee (EPC). The EPC's primary goal is to educate physicians about submitting OHIP claims that accurately reflect the service provided and are in compliance with payment requirements.

What is an Interpretive Bulletin?

Interpretive Bulletins are prepared jointly by the MOHLTC and the OMA to provide general advice and guidance to physicians on specific billing matters. Bulletins are provided for education and information purposes only, and express the MOHLTC and OMA understanding of the law at the time of publication. The information provided in this Bulletin is based on the February 2008 Schedule of Benefits – Physician Services (Schedule). While the OMA and MOHLTC make every effort to ensure that this Bulletin is accurate, the Health Insurance Act (HIA) and Regulations are the only authority in this regard and should be referred to by physicians. Changes in the statutes, regulations, or case law may affect the accuracy or currency of the information provided in this Bulletin. In the event of a discrepancy between this Bulletin and the HIA or its Regulations and/or Schedule under the Regulations, the latter prevail.

EPC Bulletins and all other MOHLTC bulletins are available on the MOHLTC website:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/ohip/bulletins/bulletin_mn.html

Purpose

This Bulletin provides information on the proper billing of fee code E550 (insertion of a closed irrigation system).

Who will find this information most useful?

This Bulletin will be of interest to physicians providing surgical services.

What is E550?

E550 (insertion of a closed irrigation system during a surgical procedure for post-operative management) is an add-

on listed on page N3 of the Schedule under wound care. Where post-operative management requires irrigation via an input port and an output port (with drainage either by gravity or suction), E550 may be eligible for payment.

Irrigation of a surgical wound and/or insertion of a drainage tube, where such is required (whether by suction drainage or otherwise), are generally accepted surgical components of the procedure(s) being performed, and therefore, included in the fee for the surgical procedure.

When is E550 eligible for payment?

E550 may be eligible for payment only if both of the following conditions are met:

1. the irrigation system is inserted during a surgical procedure; and
2. the irrigation system is for post-operative management of the condition.

Examples

Example 1

Dr. Bohn performs a left total knee arthroplasty on a 58-year-old female. His operative note reads, in part, "The knee was irrigated prior to final closure" and "A medium hemovac drain was left in the depths of the knee".

Is Dr. Bohn eligible for payment of E550 in addition to the fee for the joint replacement?

No. The operative note indicates that the surgeon irrigated

the joint and inserted a suction drain. These are generally accepted components of the primary surgery. Only code R441 (total knee replacement, both compartments) is eligible for payment.

Example 2

For his last patient of the day, Dr. Bohn performs arthroscopy on an 18-year-old male patient because of infection in the joint. Dr. Bohn's operative note reads, in part, "The knee was debrided and thoroughly irrigated. Prior to closure, a through and through irrigation system was established with inflow and outflow drainage tubes placed appropriately within the knee joint. The knee was irrigated prior to final closure."

Is Dr. Bohn eligible for payment of E550 in addition to the fee for arthroscopy?

Yes. The operative note clearly identifies insertion of an irrigation system in addition to the primary procedure.

Your feedback is welcome and appreciated!

The Education and Prevention Committee welcomes your feedback on the Bulletins in order to help ensure that these are effective educational tools. If you have comments on this Bulletin, or suggestions for future Bulletin topics, etc., please submit them in writing to:

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Note: The Physician Services Committee Secretariat will anonymously forward all comments/suggestions to the Co-Chairs of the EPC for review and consideration.

For specific inquiries on Schedule interpretation, please submit your questions IN WRITING to:

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