

# Global Surgery Tips for Cleaner Claims

---

May 15, 2019

The Medicare payment for a surgical code covers all of those typical pre-, intra-, and post-operative services. That's why you should not report those services separately.

## Supplement Global Package Knowledge With Tips

Each quoted bullet point below is listed by Medicare as included in the global surgery payment when provided in addition to the surgery.

⇒ “Pre-operative visits after the decision is made to operate. For major procedures, this includes pre-operative visits the day before the day of surgery. For minor procedures, this includes pre-operative visits the day of surgery.”

**Tip:** For major procedures, you may bill the initial evaluation separately using modifier 57 (*Decision for surgery*) on the E/M code. For minor procedures, Medicare includes the initial evaluation in the global surgery package, but you may report a significant, separately identifiable E/M on the same date as the procedure by appending modifier 25 (*Significant, separately identifiable evaluation and management service by the same physician or other qualified health care professional on the same day of the procedure or other service*). A major procedure is one with a 90-day global period (one day pre-op, the day of the procedure, and 90 days following the procedure). Minor procedures may have 0-day (no pre-op or post-op days) or 10-day (the day of surgery and 10 days following) global periods.

⇒ “Intra-operative services that are normally a usual and necessary part of a surgical procedure”

**Tip:** Don't confuse intra-operative services with “multiple surgeries.” Intra-operative services are elements of more major surgeries. “Multiple surgeries” refers to separate procedures the physician (or one in the same group) performed on the same day for which Medicare may pay separately. Expect Medicare to apply the multiple procedure payment reduction based on Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) rules.

# Global Surgery Tips for Cleaner Claims

---

## Cont'd

⇒ “All additional medical or surgical services required of the surgeon during the post-operative period of the surgery because of complications, which do not require additional trips to the operating room”

**Tip:** The AMA CPT® guidelines for the Surgery section say “Complications ... should be separately reported.” But Medicare specifies that a return to the operating room is required to report the service separately. You’ll append modifier 78 (*Unplanned return to the operating/procedure room ...*) to the code for the service performed during the return trip. Operating room may have a broader definition than you’d expect because Medicare specifies in the Global Surgery Booklet that it is “a place of service specifically equipped and staffed for the sole purpose of performing procedures.” A cardiac catheterization suite, a laser suite, or an endoscopy suite counts. A minor treatment room, recovery room, or ICU does not. Although if there is not time to transport the patient to another room because the situation is so critical, Medicare may waive the rule.

⇒ “Follow-up visits during the post-operative period of the surgery that are related to recovery from the surgery”

**Tip:** Pay attention to the term “related to recovery.” Medicare does not consider treatment for the underlying condition to be part of normal recovery, so you may report that treatment separately.

⇒ “Miscellaneous services, such as dressing changes, local incision care, removal of operative pack, removal of cutaneous sutures and staples, lines, wires, tubes, drains, casts, and splints; insertion, irrigation, and removal of urinary catheters, routine peripheral intravenous lines, nasogastric and rectal tubes; and changes and removal of tracheostomy tube.”

**Tip:** Don’t miss separately reportable services, such as diagnostic tests and procedures and clearly distinct surgical procedures that aren’t re-operations or treatment for complications. Medicare’s Global Surgery Booklet offers information on both what is and is not included in the global surgical package.