

Spinal Fusion

In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding and Medical Billing Professionals with ICD-10-PCS, the following coding tip is provided with an educational intent.

Spinal fusion is classified by the anatomic portion (column) fused and the technique (approach) used to perform the fusion. The fusion can include a discectomy, bone grafting, and spinal instrumentation.

Anterior Column: The body (corpus) of adjacent vertebrae (interbody fusion). The anterior column can be fused using an anterior, lateral, or posterior technique.

Posterior Column: Posterior structures of adjacent vertebrae (pedicle, lamina, facet, transverse process, or “gutter” fusion). A posterior column fusion can be performed using a posterior, posterolateral, or lateral transverse technique.

Approaches: Posterior or from the back (most common); anterior or from the front through a laparotomy
Tips:

- If multiple vertebral joints from the same spinal level are fused, a separate procedure is coded for each vertebral joint that uses a **different device and/or qualifier** (anterior approach with anterior column; posterior approach with posterior column; posterior approach with anterior column)
- Code decompression procedures only when it is not the approach to another procedure
- Devices: If an interbody fusion device is used to render the joint immobile (alone or containing other material like bone graft), code only device value Interbody Fusion Device; If bone graft is the only device used to render the joint immobile, code only the device value Nonautologous Tissue Substitute or Autologous Tissue Substitute; If a mixture of autologous and nonautologous bone graft with or without biological or synthetic extenders or binders) is used to render the joint immobile, code only the device value Autologous Tissue Substitute.

Operation Performed: L3-S1: Lumbar laminectomy, decompression of cauda equina, posterior spinal fusion, segmental instrumentation, and local bone grafting using morselized bone from bone bank.

Examples:

OSG1071	Fusion 2-4 lumbar joint with autologous tissue substitute, posterior approach posterior column, open
OSG3071	Fusion lumbosacral joint with autologous tissue substitute, posterior approach posterior column, open

Reference: 2016 Official ICD-10 PCS Coding Guidelines (cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Downloads/2016-Official-ICD-10-PCS-Coding-Guidelines-.pdf)

Coding Clinic is the official resource and authority for ICD-10 coding rules and conventions.

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