

ACNE GUIDELINES: Acne Treatment Reimbursement Algorithm

American Academy of Dermatology

GLOBAL ALLIANCE ACNE TREATMENT ALGORITHM

Acne Severity	1st Choice	Alternatives ⁽¹⁾	Alternatives for Females ^(1,4)	Maintenance Therapy
MILD				
Comedonal	Topical Retinoid	Alt. Topical Retinoid or Azelaic Acid* or Salicylic acid	See 1st Choice	Topical Retinoid
Mixed and Papular/pustular	Topical Retinoid + Topical Antimicrobial	Alt. Topical Retinoid Antimicrobial Agent or Alt. Topical Retinoid or Azelaic Acid*	See 1st Choice	Topical Retinoid
Moderate				
Mixed and Papular/pustular	Oral Antibiotic + Topical Retinoid +/- BPO	Alt. Oral Antibiotic + Alt. Topical Retinoid +/- BPO	Oral Antiandrogen ³ + Topical Retinoid/ Azelaic Acid* +/- Topical Antimicrobial	Topical Retinoid +/- BPO
Nodular²	Oral Antibiotic + Topical Retinoid + BPO	Oral Isotretinoin or Alt. Oral Antibiotic + Alt. Topical Retinoid +/- BPO/Azelaic Acid*	Oral Antiandrogen ³ + Topical Retinoid/ +/- Oral Antibiotic +/- Antimicrobial	Topical Retinoid +/- BPO
Severe				
Nodular/ Conglobate	Oral Isotretinoin ⁴	High Dose Oral Antibiotic + Topical Retinoid + BPO	High Dose Oral Antiandrogen ³ + Topical Retinoid +/- Alt. Topical Antimicrobial	Topical Retinoid +/- BPO

1. Consider physical removal of comedones. 2. With small nodules (<0.5 cm). 3. Second course in case of relapse. 4. For pregnancy, options are limited. 5. For full discussion, see Golnick H, et al. JAAD. 2003;49 (Suppl):1-37.

Reprinted with permission from JAAD Thiboutot D et al. New insights into the management of acne: An update from the Global Alliance to Improve Outcomes in Acne Group. J Am Acad Dermatol. 2009 May;60(5 Suppl):S1-50.

LISTING OF DERMATOLOGIC ICD-9 DIAGNOSTIC CODES

Acne rosacea	695.3
Acne varioliformis (frontalis & necrotica)	706.0
Acne other	706.1

CPT CODING FOR ACNE TREATMENT/PROCEDURES

10040	Acne surgery (eg, marsupialization, opening or removal of multiple milia, comedones, cysts, pustules)
11900	Injection, intralesional; up to and including seven lesions
11901	Injection, intralesional; more than seven lesions
17110	Destruction (eg, laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement), of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular lesions; up to 14 lesions
17111	Destruction (eg, laser surgery, electrosurgery, cryosurgery, chemosurgery, surgical curettement), of benign lesions other than skin tags or cutaneous vascular lesions; 15 or more lesions
17340	Cryotherapy (CO2 slush, liquid nitrogen) for acne
17360	Chemical exfoliation for acne (eg, acne paste, acid)
17999	Unspecified dermatological procedure (eg, phototherapy, blue light therapy)

HCPCS CODES FOR ACNE TREATMENT

J7308	Aminolevulinic acid HCL for topical administration. 20%, single unit dosage form (354 mg)
-------	---

The key to effective billing and consistent reimbursement of dermatology services is a thorough understanding of the required coding system and documentation guidelines.

CODING

Health information coding is defined as: "the transformation of verbal descriptions of diseases, injuries, and procedures into numeric or alphanumeric designations."

ICD-9-CM

ICD-9-CM is the tool to use to find the most accurate diagnosis codes that establish medical necessity for the procedures performed in the dermatology practice. Dermatology procedures are coded using CPT codes.

CPT

CPT also includes guidelines and principles for the correct application of CPT procedural codes. Understanding the guidelines for the correct application of CPT as well as knowing how to properly use modifiers, will create a clean claim that bypasses software edits on its first submission, ensuring the claim's prompt payment.

HCPCS

HCPCS is a system for identifying items and services. It is not a methodology or system for making coverage or payment determinations and the existence of a code does not, of itself, determine coverage or noncoverage for an item or service.



American Academy of Dermatology

Correspondence: PO Box 4014
Schaumburg, Illinois 60168
Toll-free: 866.503.SKIN (7546)
International: 847.240.1280
Fax: 847.240.1859

For more information:

www.aad.org/education-and-quality-care/clinical-guidelines

DISCLAIMER: This is a conceptual scheme based on the recommendations of a guideline. A third party payer may have separate or additional requirements. Check with patient's insurance payer, as acne treatment can be specific to an employer's policy. American Academy of Dermatology has provided this information to the best of its knowledge as a guide to providers. AAD does not guarantee reimbursement. Providers assume responsibility for all care provided and claims filed. For additional information please call 866-503-SKIN (7546).

Copyright © 2012 American Academy of Dermatology. All rights reserved.