

Once in a Lifetime Procedures Policy, Professional

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

You are responsible for submission of accurate claims. This reimbursement policy is intended to ensure that you are reimbursed based on the code or codes that correctly describe the health care services provided. UnitedHealthcare reimbursement policies may use Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or other coding guidelines. References to CPT or other sources are for definitional purposes only and do not imply any right to reimbursement.*

This reimbursement policy applies to all health care services billed on CMS 1500 forms and, when specified, to those billed on UB04 forms. Coding methodology, industry-standard reimbursement logic, regulatory requirements, benefits design and other factors are considered in developing reimbursement policy.

This information is intended to serve only as a general reference resource regarding UnitedHealthcare's reimbursement policy for the services described and is not intended to address every aspect of a reimbursement situation. Accordingly, UnitedHealthcare may use reasonable discretion in interpreting and applying this policy to health care services provided in a particular case. Further, the policy does not address all issues related to reimbursement for health care services provided to UnitedHealthcare enrollees. Other factors affecting reimbursement may supplement, modify or, in some cases, supersede this policy. These factors may include, but are not limited to: legislative mandates, the physician or other provider contracts, the enrollee's benefit coverage documents and/or other reimbursement, medical or drug policies. Finally, this policy may not be implemented exactly the same way on the different electronic claims processing systems used by UnitedHealthcare due to programming or other constraints; however, UnitedHealthcare strives to minimize these variations. UnitedHealthcare may modify this reimbursement policy at any time by publishing a new version of the policy on this Website. However, the information presented in this policy is accurate and current as of the date of publication.

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Application

This reimbursement policy applies to services reported using the 1500 Health Insurance Claim Form (a/k/a CMS-1500) or its electronic equivalent or its successor form. This policy applies to all products and all network and non-network physicians and other qualified health care professionals, including, but not limited to, non-network authorized and percent of charge contract physicians and other qualified health care professionals.

Policy

Overview

The Once in a Lifetime Procedures Policy identifies procedures that because of the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) code description and/or human anatomy can be performed by a physician(s) or other qualified health care professional(s) only once in a patient's lifetime.

Reimbursement Guidelines

UnitedHealthcare will reimburse certain procedures only once during a patient's lifetime. Once in a Lifetime Procedures are not limited to a single CPT code, but may be represented by Code Families, which are a group of CPT codes that describe the same or similar type of service. Under this policy, UnitedHealthcare provides reimbursement for only one procedure from a designated Code Family during a patient's lifetime.

For example, there are four separate appendectomy CPT codes that can be used, based upon the particular circumstance, to report the removal of the appendix. The four codes, listed below, make up the Code Family that describes the removal of an appendix.

Appendectomy Code Family

44950
 44955
 44960
 44970

When any single or multiple physician or other qualified health care professional reports a code from the Once in a Lifetime Procedures list, that code or any code from the same Code Family will be reimbursed only once during a patient's lifetime. In the appendectomy example, a single code from the Appendectomy Code Family will be reimbursed only once during a patient's lifetime, because each person has only one appendix and can have only one appendectomy during his or her lifetime.

Once in a Lifetime Procedures

Proc Code	Family Group	Proc Code	Family Group
30160	RHINECTOMY	44210	COLECTOMY
31360	LARYNGECTOMY	44211	COLECTOMY
31365	LARYNGECTOMY	44212	COLECTOMY
32440	PNEUMONECTOMY	44950	APPENDECTOMY
32442	PNEUMONECTOMY	44955	APPENDECTOMY
32445	PNEUMONECTOMY	44960	APPENDECTOMY
38100	SPLENECTOMY	44970	APPENDECTOMY
38102	SPLENECTOMY	45110	PROCTECTOMY
41140	GLOSSECTOMY	45112	PROCTECTOMY
41145	GLOSSECTOMY	45119	PROCTECTOMY
42140	UVULECTOMY	45120	PROCTECTOMY
43620	GASTRECTOMY	45121	PROCTECTOMY
43621	GASTRECTOMY	45126	PROCTECTOMY
43622	GASTRECTOMY	45395	PROCTECTOMY
44150	COLECTOMY	45397	PROCTECTOMY
44151	COLECTOMY	47562	LAPAROSCOPY
44155	COLECTOMY	47563	LAPAROSCOPY
44156	COLECTOMY	47564	LAPAROSCOPY
44157	COLECTOMY	47600	LAPAROSCOPY
44158	COLECTOMY	47605	LAPAROSCOPY
47610	LAPAROSCOPY	55845	PROSTATECTOMY
47612	LAPAROSCOPY	55866	PROSTATECTOMY
47620	LAPAROSCOPY	56625	VULVECTOMY
48155	PANCREATECTOMY	56633	VULVECTOMY
49250	UMBILECTOMY	56634	VULVECTOMY
51570	CYSTECTOMY	56637	VULVECTOMY

Once in a Lifetime Procedures

Proc Code	Family Group	Proc Code	Family Group
51575	CYSTECTOMY	57110	VAGINECTOMY
51580	CYSTECTOMY	57111	VAGINECTOMY
51585	CYSTECTOMY	57530	TRACHELECTOMY
51590	CYSTECTOMY	57531	TRACHELECTOMY
51595	CYSTECTOMY	57540	CERVICAL STUMP EXCISION
51596	CYSTECTOMY	57545	CERVICAL STUMP EXCISION
51597	PELVIC EXENTERATION	57550	CERVICAL STUMP EXCISION
51925	HYSTERECTOMY	57555	CERVICAL STUMP EXCISION
52649	ENUCLEATION	57556	CERVICAL STUMP EXCISION
53210	URETHRECTOMY	58150	HYSTERECTOMY
53215	URETHRECTOMY	58152	HYSTERECTOMY
54125	AMPUTATION	58180	HYSTERECTOMY
54130	AMPUTATION	58200	HYSTERECTOMY
54135	AMPUTATION	58210	HYSTERECTOMY
54150	CIRCUMCISION	58240	HYSTERECTOMY
54160	CIRCUMCISION	58260	HYSTERECTOMY
54161	CIRCUMCISION	58262	HYSTERECTOMY
54861	EPIDIDYMECTOMY	58263	HYSTERECTOMY
55801	SUBTOTAL PROSTATECTOMY	58267	HYSTERECTOMY
55810	PROSTATECTOMY	58270	HYSTERECTOMY
55812	PROSTATECTOMY	58275	HYSTERECTOMY
55815	PROSTATECTOMY	58280	HYSTERECTOMY
55821	PROSTATECTOMY	58285	HYSTERECTOMY
55831	PROSTATECTOMY	58290	HYSTERECTOMY
55840	PROSTATECTOMY	58291	HYSTERECTOMY
55842	PROSTATECTOMY	58292	HYSTERECTOMY
58294	HYSTERECTOMY	58573	HYSTERECTOMY
58541	HYSTERECTOMY	58575	HYSTERECTOMY
58542	HYSTERECTOMY	58950	HYSTERECTOMY
58543	HYSTERECTOMY	58951	HYSTERECTOMY
58544	HYSTERECTOMY	58952	HYSTERECTOMY
58548	HYSTERECTOMY	58953	HYSTERECTOMY
58550	HYSTERECTOMY	58954	HYSTERECTOMY
58552	HYSTERECTOMY	58956	HYSTERECTOMY

Once in a Lifetime Procedures

Proc Code	Family Group	Proc Code	Family Group
58554	HYSTERECTOMY	60240	THYROIDECTOMY
58570	HYSTERECTOMY	60252	THYROIDECTOMY
58571	HYSTERECTOMY	60254	THYROIDECTOMY
58572	HYSTERECTOMY	60270	THYROIDECTOMY
		60271	THYROIDECTOMY

Modifiers

There may be situations that require the code(s) for a Once in a Lifetime Procedure to be submitted more than once during a patient's lifetime. In such cases, more than one Once in a Lifetime Procedure, whether the same code or a different code from the same Code Family, will be considered separately for reimbursement if reported with one of the following modifiers:

- Modifier 53
- Modifier 55
- Modifier 56
- Modifier 58

For additional information related to the percentage of the allowable fee to be paid when one of these modifiers is appended to a claim for a subsequent procedure, please refer to the Discontinued Procedure, Split Surgical Package and/or Global Days policies.

Definitions

Once in a Lifetime Procedure	A procedure that can be performed by a physician(s) or other qualified health care professional(s) only once in a patient's lifetime.
Code Family	A group of CPT codes that describe the same or similar type of service.

Questions and Answers

1	<p>Q: Would there ever be an instance where a CPT code for a Once in a Lifetime Procedure may be reported more than once?</p> <p>A: Yes, there are instances where a CPT code for a Once in a Lifetime Procedure may be reported more than once. Modifiers may be used to indicate a procedure or service has been altered in some way, but not changed in its actual code description. For example, by definition, modifier 53 (Discontinued Procedure) is to be used when a procedure is terminated for unforeseeable circumstances. Per coding guidelines, the procedure code would be initially reported with modifier 53 appended to the CPT code to indicate the discontinued procedure and then at a later time, the CPT code would be submitted again when (if) the procedure took place in its entirety.</p>
2	<p>Q: How is a Once in a Lifetime Procedure reimbursed when reported by two different physicians on different dates of service?</p>

	<p>A: When any physician or other qualified health care professional reports a code from the Once in a Lifetime Procedure policy list on multiple dates of service excluding the same date of service, the code will be reimbursed only once. UnitedHealthcare follows a "first in, first out" claim payment methodology in determining which claim will be considered for reimbursement when duplicate claims are received.</p>
3	<p>Q: What if two different physicians each report the same procedure on the same date of service for the same patient from the Once in a Lifetime Procedures list?</p> <p>A: The Once in a Lifetime Procedure codes are subject to duplicate billing logic when reported by the same or different providers.</p>

Resources
<p>American Medical Association, <i>Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)</i> and associated publications and services</p> <p>Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC)</p> <p>Department of Health Care Services, Medi-Cal</p>

History	
1/1/2022	<p>Policy Version Change Table Updated: Removed 59135 History Section - Entries prior to 1/1/2019 archived</p>
6/7/2021	<p>Policy Version Change Attachments Section: Removed attachment(s) and converted to table(s)</p>
1/1/2021	<p>Policy Version Change Attachments Section: Once in a Lifetime Procedures list updated History Section - Entries prior to 1/1/2019 archived</p>
4/20/2020	<p>Title Section: Added "Commercial" to Policy Header</p>
3/6/2020	<p>Annual Anniversary Date and Version Change Reimbursement Guideline Section: Removed Code Descriptions Attachments Section: Once in a Lifetime Procedures list updated History Section - Entries prior to 1/1/2018 archived</p>
9/1/2010	<p>Policy implemented by UnitedHealthcare Employer & Individual</p>