

**When to Report the CPT Codes for Removal of Hardware Multiple Times**

The June 2009 CPT Assistant has clarified when to report the removal of hardware CPT codes multiple times. It is only indicated when fixation device(s) are removed from separate fractures at different anatomical sites or for two fractures that are considered noncontiguous on the same bone (such as a proximal and distal fracture site).

One example shows that it would be appropriate to report 20680 and 20680-59 for a bimalleolar fracture when screw(s) are removed from the lateral malleolus (distal fibula) and then a plate with screws are removed from the medial malleolus (tibia) through a separate incision. It doesn't matter what type of implant system was removed the deciding factor was that it was two different fracture sites.

An example of incorrect use would be reporting code 20680 twice when an intramedullary rod (IM rod) is removed. This usually cannot be accomplished through one incision since there are locking screws on both ends of the rod so stab incisions are made proximal and distal to release the screws – this is still considered a single implant system for fixation of one fracture site. CPT code 20680 would only be reported once in this case.

- 20670** Removal of implant; superficial, (eg, buried wire, pin or rod) (separate procedure)
  
- 20680** Removal of implant; deep (eg, buried wire, pin, screw, metal band, nail, rod or plate)