

# Low Anterior Resection and Sigmoid

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On behalf of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons Healthcare Economics Committee

## QUESTION

I did a laparoscopic low anterior resection (LAR) for cancer and billed 44207. This patient also had a polyp in the descending colon, so I also removed the sigmoid and descending colon and brought down the splenic flexure with anastomosis to the mid/lower rectum. Can I also bill a partial colectomy code 44204 with reduced service for this additional service?

## ANSWER

Based on a review of National Council on Compensation Insurance coding guidelines, billing for the sigmoid resection would not be allowed together with the LAR because they are “bundled.” You would be able to bill for the laparoscopic splenic flexure mobilization (Current Procedural Terminology [CPT] 44213), but a sigmoid resection is often done in conjunction with the LAR (CPT 44207). If there was significant difficulty (aside from needing to take down the splenic flexure) during the procedure, then you may be able to add a 22 modifier, but this would require very detailed information as to the difficulty to justify modifier 22, such as extra time required, etc. When using modifiers, it is often best to add a separate specific statement to your operative report to justify the modifier use.

- Use CPT codes 44207 and 44213 for laparoscopic LAR and splenic flexure mobilization, respectively. Possibly add modifier 22.

## DISCLAIMER

Your question will be answered to the best of our ability using currently available legitimate resources. These

include but are not limited to CPT Codes, International Classification of Diseases - Tenth Edition (ICD-10), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System and Diagnosis Related Groups, as well as common hospital billing practices.

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## COMMON RESOURCES

- Current Procedural Terminology. CPT® 2023 Professional Edition, pages 366–370.
- AMA RUC Database 2024, version 1.2.
- CMS National Correct Coding Initiative Edits: <https://www.cms.gov/national-correct-coding-initiative-ncci>
- AMA CPT: <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/cpt>
- CMS Physician Fee Schedule: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/fee-schedules/physician>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ICD-10: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/icd-10-cm/index.html>
- American College of Surgeons CPT Coding Bulletin Articles Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.facs.org/for-medical-professionals/news-publications/news-and-articles/bulletin/2024/november-december-2024-volume-109-issue-10/frequently-asked-questions-about-cpt-coding/>

Submit coding and billing questions to: [dcr4codingcorner@gmail.com](mailto:dcr4codingcorner@gmail.com)

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