

Ligation of Intersphincteric Fistula Tract

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

QUESTION

How do you code for anal fistula surgery by ligation of the intersphincteric fistula tract (LIFT)?

ANSWER

Currently, there is no CPT code for the LIFT procedure.

If a seton is placed as the initial procedure, use CPT code 46280, which applies to any trans-sphincteric fistula with or without a seton. If the LIFT is being performed without initial seton placement, use CPT code 46280 with modifier 22 denoting extra effort for the procedure, which may or may not be honored pending specific payer. Using the modifier 22 requires a very specific and detailed explanation. An appended note to the main operative report explaining the need for the modifier may be helpful, outlining the extenuating circumstances of the procedure related to the amount of anal sphincter involved, concern for fecal incontinence, and extra time spent over and above a primary fistulotomy.

If the LIFT is performed after an initial seton placement during the global period, use CPT code 46285 for the second-stage fistulotomy.

Some surgeons use a minimal anal advancement flap after the LIFT procedure to cover the internal opening of the fistula track, in which case CPT code 46288 for anal fistula with advancement flap could be used.

DISCLAIMER

Your question was answered to the best of our ability using currently available legitimate resources. These include but

are not limited to Current Procedural Technology (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

- CPT 2023 Professional Edition, pages 366–370.
- AMA Relative Value Unit Update Committee (RUC): <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/rvs-update-committee-ruc/rvs-update-committee-ruc>.
- 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 Frequently Asked Questions About CPT Coding: <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 questions to doncolvin.hec@gmail.com

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