

# REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

Intervertebral Biomechanical Device (22851) versus Structural Allograft (20931)

The American Medical Association (AMA) issued guidance in the February 2005 edition of CPT Assistant regarding the proper coding for allograft bone used in spinal procedures. According to the AMA's current position:

- » A threaded bone dowel is the only allograft bone that would qualify for CPT® code 22851 - Application of intervertebral biomechanical device(s) to vertebral defect or interspace.
- » All other structural allograft bone should be coded with CPT® code 20931 - Allograft for spine surgery only, structural.

## Guidelines for CPT® Code 20931

- » All structural allograft products, with the exception of threaded bone dowels, should be reported with code 20931<sup>1</sup>
- » Morselized allograft bone is coded using 20930 (e.g., demineralized bone matrix [DBM])
- » Medicare guidelines stipulate that code 20931 should only be reported **one time per case**<sup>4</sup>
- » Examples of structural allograft devices (20931):
  - TANGENT® Cortical Bone
  - CORNERSTONE® ACSR/L-ACSR
  - CORNERSTONE® ASR/L-ASR
  - PRECISION-GRAFT® Allograft Spacer

## Guidelines for CPT® Code 22851

- » Intervertebral biomechanical devices and spacers made of **metal, PEEK, or other synthetic material** are coded with 22851<sup>1</sup>
- » Use code 22851 for **threaded** bone dowels<sup>1</sup>
- » Code 22851 should be reported **one time per level**, regardless of the number of devices implanted at each level<sup>2,3</sup>
  - Examples of intervertebral biomechanical devices (22851):
  - VERTE-STACK® BOOMERANG® Vertebral Body Spacer
  - VERTE-STACK® CAPSTONE® PEEK Vertebral Body Spacer
  - HOURGLASS® PEEK Vertebral Body Spacer
  - INTER FIX™ Threaded Fusion Devices
  - LT-CAGE® Lumbar Tapered Fusion Devices
  - VERTE-STACK® TELAMON® PEEK Vertebral Body Spacer
  - VERTE-STACK® CORNERSTONE® PSR PEEK Vertebral Body Spacer
  - VERTE-STACK® CRESCENT™ PEEK Vertebral Body Spacer

## Physician Coding and Payment

CPT Code	Description	RVU	2010 Medicare Payment*
20930	Allograft for spine surgery only, morselized	0.00	\$0.00
20931	Allograft for spine surgery only, structural	3.02	\$109
22851	Application of intervertebral biomechanical device(s) to vertebral defect or interspace	11.08	\$400

\* Calculated for 2010: RVU (no geographic adjustment) x Medicare Conversion Factor for 2010

Further questions? Please contact:

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1 CPT Assistant. Musculoskeletal System/Surgery, February 2005, p. 14.  
 2 CPT Assistant. How to Code Prosthetic Devices, September 1997, p. 8.  
 3 CPT Assistant. CPT 2000 Code and Guideline Changes: A Comprehensive Review, November 1999, p. 1.  
 4 CPT Assistant. Surgery: Musculoskeletal System, January 2004, p. 27.



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