



Coding Summary for Biopsy Techniques

Biopsy techniques may be used to obtain diagnoses related to inflammatory or neoplastic conditions of the skin, soft tissue or bone. Depending on the biopsy technique that is used and its precise target, the manner of coding will vary widely, as will reimbursement. This document is intended to provide a practical review of the most common ICD-10 codes used in an office-based setting and is for reference purposes only.

Biopsy Codes SKIN

11100: This code may apply whenever a small part of a much larger skin lesion is sampled for histopathology. This code should be applied, but not be limited to, punch biopsies, curettings, and scissor biopsies. If the edge of an ulcer is sampled with a scalpel to rule out neoplasia, the same code would apply. This code does not mandate deep tissue or anesthesia; however, depending on the technique deep tissue might be expected and anesthesia might be necessary. Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to L98.9 (Disorder of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, unspecified), L25.9 (Unspecified contact dermatitis, unspecified cause) and G60.9 (Hereditary and idiopathic neuropathy, unspecified).

11101: This code may apply when a subsequent small part of a larger skin lesion is sampled for histopathology (modifier not necessary). Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to L98.9 (Disorder of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, unspecified), L25.9 (Unspecified contact dermatitis, unspecified cause), and G60.9 (Hereditary and idiopathic neuropathy, unspecified).

11300 series of codes: These codes may apply when skin is sampled by **shave or saucerization technique**. This series of codes imply that the lesion in question is being “shaven off”; however, not necessarily with negative margins. In other words, unlike CPT 11100, the purpose of this procedure is not to take a small part of a much larger lesion. Rather, the lesion is largely removed with the biopsy technique itself. Because nothing can be effectively shaven off without sampling viable skin, this code connotes that the biopsy includes at least a portion of superficial dermis (biopsy site must bleed or ooze). The precise code that is used may vary depending on the biopsy site and the size of the lesion that is being sampled (see table 1).

Table 1			
Lesion size/site	0-0.5cm	0.51-1.0cm	1.1-2.0cm
Leg	11300	11301	11302
Foot	11305	11306	11307

Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to L98.9 (Disorder of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, unspecified), D23.71 (Other benign neoplasm of skin of right lower limb, including hip), D23.72 (Other benign neoplasm of skin of left lower limb, including hip), C44.702 (Unspecified malignant neoplasm of skin of right lower limb, including hip) and C44.709 (Unspecified malignant neoplasm of skin of left lower limb, including hip).

NAIL UNIT

11755: This code may apply when tissue of the nail unit (nail plate, nail bed, nail fold, or nail matrix) is sampled for histopathology. This code may be used to characterize inflammatory or neoplastic lesions of the nail unit; however, it connotes more than simply a “distal clipping of nail”. Possible ICD-10 codes: L98.9 (Disorder of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, unspecified), L60.(X) (abnormality of nail; (X) digit required for specificity).

SOFT TISSUE

10021: This code may apply when a soft tissue mass is sampled by **aspiration biopsy technique**. Soft tissue is defined as the non-epithelial, non-skeletal, and non-visceral tissue of the body. Included as soft tissue are fibrous tissue, muscle, adipose tissue, peripheral nerves, and vascular tissue. In the foot, the most common lesions that might be sampled by aspiration biopsy are ganglion cysts and ganglion cyst-like lesions. Because ganglion cysts represent more than half of all soft tissue tumors in the foot, they have been shown to represent a common pitfall in the diagnosis of pedal sarcoma. In fact, Scully et al of Duke University noted that more than half of the pedal synovial sarcomas in their series had been misdiagnosed as ganglion cysts. This led to long delays prior to definitive therapy. Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to D49.2 (Neoplasm of unspecified behavior of bone, soft tissue and skin), C49.21 (Malignant neoplasm of connective and other soft tissue of right lower limb, including hip), C49.22 (Malignant neoplasm of connective and other soft tissue of left lower limb, including hip), D21.21 (Benign neoplasm of connective and other soft tissue of right lower limb, including hip) and D21.22 (Benign neoplasm of connective and other soft tissue of left lower limb, including hip).

10022: This code may apply when a soft tissue mass is sampled by **aspiration biopsy with imaging guidance**. Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to D49.2 (Neoplasm of unspecified behavior of bone, soft tissue, and skin), C49.21 (Malignant neoplasm of connective and soft tissue of right lower limb, including hip), C49.22 (Malignant neoplasm of connective and soft tissue of left lower limb, including hip), D21.21 (Benign neoplasm of connective and soft tissue of right lower limb, including hip) and D21.22 (Benign neoplasm of connective and soft tissue of left lower limb, including hip).

BONE

20220: This code may apply when superficial bone tissue is sampled by **needle or trochar**. Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to M86.171 (Other acute osteomyelitis, right ankle and foot), M86.172 (Other acute osteomyelitis, left ankle and foot), M86.671 (Other chronic osteomyelitis, right ankle and foot), M86.672 (Other chronic osteomyelitis, left ankle and foot), C40.31 (Malignant neoplasm of short bones of right lower limb), C40.32 (Malignant neoplasm of short bones of left lower limb), D16.31 (Benign neoplasm of short bones of right lower limb), D16.32 (Benign neoplasm of short bones of left lower limb), and D49.2 (Neoplasm of unspecified behavior of bone, soft tissue, and skin).

20240: This code may apply when superficial bone tissue is sampled by **open biopsy**. Possible ICD-10 codes include but may not be limited to M86.171 (Other acute osteomyelitis, right ankle and foot), M86.172 (Other acute osteomyelitis, left ankle and foot), M86.671 (Other chronic osteomyelitis, right ankle and foot), M86.672 (Other chronic osteomyelitis, left ankle and foot), C40.31 (Malignant neoplasm of short bones of right lower limb), C40.32 (Malignant neoplasm of short bones of left lower limb), D16.31 (Benign neoplasm of short bones of right lower limb), D16.32 (Benign neoplasm of short bones of left lower limb), and D49.2 (Neoplasm of unspecified behavior of bone, soft tissue, and skin).

***DISCLAIMER:** *This document is not intended to replace the need to seek coding advice from the applicable third party payor and/or your own coding staff or consultant. Further, the ICD-10-CM codes listed here are for reference purposes only.*