

Your Office & Oral Cancer

As Dental Health Services plan members renew this year, they will be eligible for a new benefit in oral cancer screenings. Increasingly, dental offices are offering this service as a way to increase early detection of oral cancer, which is known to have the greatest impact on reducing mortality rates associated with the disease.

According to the ADA, Oral cancer strikes more than 34,000 Americans each year. Every single hour, an American dies of oral cancer, and the mortality rate associated with oral cancer has shown little improvement over the last 40 years. More than 25 percent of those diagnosed die, although with early detection, chances of survival are much improved.

Help your patients reduce their risk of oral cancer by eliminating some of the more avoidable conditions. Tobacco and alcohol consumption as well as some persistent viral infections such as HPV contribute heavily to risk for developing oral

cancer. Those who smoke and drink have a risk 15 times greater of developing oral cancer than those who don't.

The biggest problem with oral cancer is that it is too often discovered after it has metastasized to other areas of the body. Early detection is the key to reducing the number of deaths from oral cancer. Consider equipping your office with an oral cancer screening tool such as ViziLite and VELscope, which use specialized types of light to identify tissue abnormalities. These screenings vastly improve the chances of recognizing a problem before it becomes an unconquerable condition.

If you are considering offering oral cancer screenings in your office, let us know! We can help provide you with additional resources, so you can offer even more to support the oral health of your patients.

Teach your patients to recognize the warning signs of oral cancer:

- A sore that bleeds easily or does not heal
- A color change of the oral tissues
- A lump, thickening, rough spot, crust or small eroded area
- Pain, tenderness, or numbness anywhere in the mouth or on the lips
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving the jaw or tongue

For more information on oral cancer early detection, visit www.ada.org, www.vizilite.com, or www.velscope.com.



Dental Health Services

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Learn Your ABC's

ABC's – Accurate Billing Codes – This is a section where we work to help define some of the trickier dental codes. The procedures we include are some that are most often used incorrectly, and so we use this section to help our dentists make sure they are billing for the proper procedure.

This round, it's D2950 versus D2952:

“D2950 core buildup, including any pins”

“Refers to building up of anatomical crown when restorative crown will be placed, whether or not pins are used. A material is placed in the tooth preparation for a crown when there is insufficient tooth strength and retention for the crown procedure. This should not be reported when the procedure only involves a filler to eliminate any undercut, box form, or concave irregularity in the preparation.”

VS.

“D2952 post and core in addition to crown, indirectly fabricated”

“Post and core are custom fabricated as a single unit.”

These two codes commonly cause confusion, and most often, it is because it sounds like they could be co-operative codes and would be billed together. In fact, D2952 already includes D2950. Additionally, where D2950 is not necessarily a root canal tooth, D2952 is always a root canal tooth. So take care, and make sure you're billing all of your procedures properly.

Thanks for reading this edition of ABC's – Accurate Billing Codes – we'll be back next time with more thrilling commentary shining a bright light on the sometimes dark-art of dental billing.

Source: Dr. Stanley Ayers, Director of Dental Services and Compliance – Dental Health Services

Feedback, Questions or Comments?

We're always happy to hear any comments or suggestions you have regarding our service to you, and your service to your patients. Especially regarding the Dental Health Services Quality Assurance Program, it's always in our best interest to help you any way we can to serve your patients better. Your Professional Service Specialist is available to answer all of your questions.

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