

Explanation of Extraction Codes for the Purpose of Billing

After consultation between the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association (SDTA) and the College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CDSS) the following statement has been developed. This is to clarify the proper use of procedure codes relating to extractions performed by dental therapists.

Codes must be used based on the procedure performed rather than what insurance will cover. All providers must charge the code that reflects the procedure that was provided and must not be altered to satisfy authorized practices or scope of practice or insurance billing issues.

The Dental Disciplines Act allows for dental therapists to perform “simple extractions of primary and permanent teeth”.

A referral to a dentist or an oral surgeon should always be made if any complications are suspected or anticipated, during treatment planning, for an extraction. Dental therapists are trained that no extraction should be commenced if the tooth or root is broken below the alveolar process and is not visible. Dental therapists are trained to section permanent teeth and place sutures if, during the performance of a ‘simple extraction’, it becomes necessary. The sectioning of teeth for root removal would be an exceptional circumstance and should not be considered routine for dental therapists. Dental therapists can remove residual tooth root tips if they are visible or erupted. No attempt should be made to remove a root tip that is covered with soft tissue or bone.

The Canadian Dental Association Uniform System of Coding and List of Services on which the CDSS fee guide is based, does not consider the scope of practice of different providers. It is based on proper coding for the service performed, and all users of the fee guide must adhere to that principle. Furthermore, if a tooth is sectioned to complete an extraction (whether anticipated or not) the codes 71201/71209 should be used. The description for code 71201/71209 is the following: “Odontectomy, Erupted Tooth, Surgical Approach, Requiring Surgical Flap and/or Sectioning of Tooth”. (Note that dental therapists are not trained to perform a surgical flap.) The acceptable codes for a dental therapist to use for residual root removal are 72311/72319 which is “Removal, Residual Roots, Erupted”.

For the reasons listed above, all codes should be entered accurately to reflect the service provided. The above only applies to dental therapists that been trained in the extraction of permanent teeth and the placement of sutures at the National School of Dental Therapy or have successfully completed the National School of Dental Therapy’s permanent extraction module.