

Coding & Billing for Acupuncturists



Our health plan offers acupuncture benefits that may vary between products and employer groups. Therefore, it is important to check benefits and eligibility prior to rendering services. You can check benefits and eligibility via our website, ExcellusBCBS.com/Provider, or by contacting Customer Care at 1-800-920-8889.

Please follow the coding and billing guidelines established by the American Medical Association (AMA) to help ensure that your claims are processed accurately and timely.

The AMA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes are used for acupuncture services:

- **97810** (acupuncture, 1 or more needles; without electrical stimulation, **initial** 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient)
- **+97811** (acupuncture, 1 or more needles; without electrical stimulation, for each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with reinsertion of needles)
- **97813** (acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, **initial** 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient)
- **+97814** (acupuncture, 1 or more needles; with electrical stimulation, for each additional 15 minutes of personal one-on-one contact with the patient, with reinsertion of needles)

According to the AMA CPT guidelines, acupuncture is reported based on 15 minute increments of personal (face-to-face) contact with the patient. For CPT codes **97810** and **97813**, the following specific preliminary activities are included in the initial service.

Preliminary Activities	
<i>Time spent performing these services is counted towards the 15 minutes personal contact time required for the initial service.</i>	
▪ Chart review	▪ Greeting patient
▪ Obtaining a brief account of the results of the previous treatment and any significant changes that have occurred since the last visit	▪ Hand washing
▪ Palpation of tender points	▪ Needle selection
▪ Marking and cleaning of sites	▪ Removal of needles and closure of sites

It's important to note that the initial acupuncture codes 97810 or 97813 may be billed only once during an encounter for needle insertion regardless of the number of needles inserted initially. In order to bill the add-on acupuncture codes **+97811** and/or **+97814**, the personal contact with the patient **must** include reinsertion of needle(s). This reinsertion does not mean removing and reinserting the same needle(s), but an additional insertion of a new needle(s).

Personal contact time applies when billing the add-on CPT codes as well. Only actual personal contact time performing acupuncture services counts. Total personal contact time along with sets of needles, removal of needles and reinsertion of new needles where applicable, must be documented in the patient's medical record. Please be aware that total needle retention time is not billable.

For additional coding and billing guidance, refer to the following web resources:

- **AMA CPT Manual:** <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/solutions-managing-your-practice/coding-billing-insurance/cpt.page>
- **AMA CPT Assistant:** <https://www.aapc.com/code/ama-cpt-assistant.aspx>