

Liposuction for Lipedema: Finding the Perfect Name - June 17 2020

Reimbursement

Reconstructive,

Medically Necessary

Code 15879 is most common CPT used. Estimated Reimbursement is about \$1,412

CPT Code: 38999: Unlisted procedure, hemic or lymphatic system. Feedback is that reimbursement using the unlisted code is possible. One could argue that the generic CPT code above is not accurate for this procedure.

No Medicare RVU's

ASPS prefers no RVU's for the four CPT liposuction codes?
Is this accurate?

While the debate over the best name for liposuction for lipedema continues, why not increase the use of the phrase: reconstructive, medically necessary liposuction? This is not a clinical name but a descriptive name for reimbursement.

Names

PROS / CONS / ISSUES

Liposuction
Suction-Assisted Lipectomy

Generic Name/CPT code: Currently used for both reconstructive and cosmetic. No difference implied.

Lymph-Sparing*

Some assert that lymph-sparing is redundant, not necessary or "marketing." The term is found in research

Tumescent

HumanMed contends that WAL is not tumescent., hence the term would eliminate their product. Term found in

Tumescent Local Anesthesia (TLA)

Same as tumescent; found in research; otherwise rarely used.,

Lymph-Sparing, Tumescent

While wordy, this appeared to cover both unique, reconstructive bases except for the WAL objection (below).

Water-Assisted (WAL)**

Specific liposuction vendor product used widely for lipedema regarded by the vendor as "not tumescent."

Vibrating Cannula (Power-Assisted) (PAL)***

Specific liposuction vendor product used widely for lipedema

Fibro-Lipo-Lymph-Aspiration

The most ambitious (and wordy) name it refers to the removal of subcutaneous adipose tissue, loose connective tissue, and fibrosis in the interstitial space (Campisi et al, 2017) Perhaps FLLA ?

Lipoplasty

A synonym for liposuction, it is not in the CPT manual nor commonly used. The suffix, -plasty means "to repair or restore."

A good argument could be made by anyone, that the current CPT codes, most often associated with the cosmetic procedure, are inadequate and incorrect to use for a more involved, fundamentally different reconstructive procedure. The new term/codes need to reflect the time, effort and complexity of the procedure.

Device Types

SAL

WAL

PAL

Laser

UltraSound (UAL)

*Safety Issues: Only a lymph-sparing procedure should be performed for lipedema..

** The term Water-Assisted Liposuction (WAL) is found in the literature and the technique/procedure is widely used for lipedema.

*** While the term "vibrating cannula is found in the literature. The vendor, Microaire Surgical LLC, describes it as Power-Assisted Liposuction (PAL). There is no implied reconstructive versus cosmetic connection.

The free market valuation of lipedema surgery is from 7-30K for the procedure

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