Chest X-Rays With Inspiration and Expiration

According to ACR, the appropriate codes to use for two PA chest x-rays performed on inspiration and expiration (e.g. post lung biopsy or for trauma cases) it is appropriate to code 71010 (chest, single view) for the single, frontal chest inspiration view, and 71035 (chest, special views e.g. lateral, decubitus, Bucky studies) for the expiration view. The expiration view of the chest is considered a special view.

If a PA and lateral chest x-ray were performed on inspiration and expiration, it would be appropriate to report 71020 for the two views of the chest on inspiration, and 71035 for the two views of the chest expiration.

Additional Chest X-Ray Information

The frontal plane (also called the coronal plane) is the plane that divides the body into a front half and a back half. It is a view obtained by visualizing the body from a vantage that’s perpendicular (90 degrees) to the upright (“anatomical position”) body. Either viewing direction that visualizes the body in this plane—whether front to back—is imaging the body in the frontal/coronal plane. (People sometimes think, “frontal plane” means “from the front,” it doesn’t. Frontal is a plane, not a vector/direction or projection.)

CPT 71010 is used to report a single view chest x-ray in the frontal plane—whether the frontal plane was obtained Anterior-posteriorly or Posterior-anteriorly. (It’s a view in the frontal plane either way)

Some special views of the chest that are single views but which are “not” basic frontal plane views include:

- AP supine or semierect
- Lateral decubitus
- AP lordotic
- Anterior oblique (right or left)
- Posterior oblique (right or left)
- Bucky studies (x-rays obtain on a Bucky table)

These would be reported with CPT 71035, Radiologic examination chest, special views.
BONE DENSITY STUDIES
(MULTIPLE SAME ENCOUNTER)

CPT 77080 Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) bone density study, 1 or more sites; axial skeleton (eg, hips, pelvis, spine)

CPT 77081 Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) bone density study, 1 or more sites; appendicular skeleton (peripheral) eg, radius, wrist, heel.

You cannot code both. Clinical Examples in Radiology, jointly published by AMA and ACR, says that it is not appropriate to code both. 77080 was valued to include 77081 when both are performed.

NCCI Policy Manual, Chapter 9 says "14. Axial bone density studies may be reported with CPT codes 77078 or 77080. Peripheral site bone density studies may be reported with CPT codes 77081, 76977, or G0130.

Although it may be medically reasonable and necessary to report both axial and peripheral bone density studies on the same date of service, NCCI edits prevent the reporting of multiple CPT codes for the axial bone density study or multiple CPT codes for the peripheral site bone density study on the same date of service."