

## Coding Brief: Reporting Codes 64490 and 64494

### CPT® Assistant.

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Although codes 64490-64495 (facet joint injection procedures) were established in the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) 2010 code set, confusion remains regarding the appropriate use of the add-on codes when facet joints are injected at different levels during the same session. The confusion was compounded when the parenthetical note following code 64494 was updated in the CPT 2023 code set. This coding brief clarifies when it would be appropriate to report add-on code 64494 with the primary procedure code 64490 during the same operative session, ie, when treating the facet joints at the junction between the thoracic and lumbar spine (ie, the T12-L1 joint and the L1-L2 joint) during the same session.

Add-on codes are usually followed by a parenthetical note(s) that instructs users how to report that code in conjunction with other codes, wherever applicable. The parenthetical note following add-on code 64494, Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral; second level (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure), instructs users that it may be reported in conjunction with code 64493, Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), lumbar or sacral; single level, for the treatment of a lumbar or sacral facet joint, or 64490, Injection(s), diagnostic or therapeutic agent, paravertebral facet (zygapophyseal) joint (or nerves innervating that joint) with image guidance (fluoroscopy or CT), cervical or thoracic; single level, for the treatment of a cervical or thoracic facet joint.

The 2023 revision to this parenthetical note has led to questions about whether the parenthetical note has a technical or typographical error. There is no error. The parenthetical note was revised to synchronize with the concept used throughout the Nervous System section in which many procedures are reported by level. In addition, different levels of the spine may be treated at the same time either unilaterally or bilaterally. The table on page 491 of the CPT® Professional 2024 codebook provides a few typical coding scenarios in which facet joints are treated at different levels and sides, and this table is reproduced as Table 1 in this article. In addition, the guidelines and parenthetical notes preceding codes 64490-64495 clearly instruct users how to report combinations of these codes. Note that codes 64490-64495 are reported **per facet joint level** treated and **not** per the individual number of injections

performed.

**Table 1. Treating Facet Joints at Different Levels and Laterality**

<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Cervical/ Thoracic</b>	<b>Lumbar/Sacral</b>
Multiple nerves injected at the same level	64490 X 1	64493 X 1
1 level injected unilaterally	64490 X 1	64493 X 1
1 level injected bilaterally	64490 50 X 1	64493 50 X 1
1 level injected bilaterally and 1 level injected unilaterally	64490 50 X 1 64491 X 1	64493 50 X 1 64494 X 1
2 levels injected unilaterally	64490 X 1 64491 X 1	64493 X 1 64494 X 1
2 levels injected bilaterally	64490 50 X 1 64491 X 2	64493 50 X 1 64494 X 2
3 or more levels injected unilaterally	64490 X 1 64491 X 1 64492 X 1	64493 X 1 64494 X 1 64495 X 1
3 or more levels injected bilaterally	64490 50 X 1 64491 X 2 64492 X 2	64493 50 X 1 64494 X 2 64495 X 2

Table 1 provides coding examples with the appropriate number of unit(s) reported for each code and the appropriate use of modifier 50, Bilateral Procedure.