

The Tether® – Vertebral Body Tethering System Coding Reference Guide

Tether Coding Hotline: (860) 321-1356 Option 2

The Tether - Vertebral Body Tethering System is intended to treat skeletally immature patients that require surgical treatment to obtain and maintain correction of progressive adolescent idiopathic scoliosis, with a major Cobb angle of 30 to 65 degrees whose osseous structure is dimensionally adequate to accommodate screw fixation, as determined by radiographic imaging. Patients should have failed bracing and/or be intolerant to brace wear.

Physician	
CPT® Code	CPT Description
22836*	Anterior thoracic vertebral body tethering, including thoracoscopy, when performed; up to 7 vertebral segments
22837*	Anterior thoracic vertebral body tethering, including thoracoscopy, when performed; 8 or more vertebral segments
22838*	Revision (eg, augmentation, division of tether), replacement, or removal of thoracic vertebral body tethering, including thoracoscopy, when performed
0656T*	Anterior lumbar or thoracolumbar vertebral body tethering; up to 7 vertebral segments
0657T*	Anterior lumbar or thoracolumbar vertebral body tethering; 8 or more vertebral segments
0790T*	Revision (eg, augmentation, division of tether), replacement, or removal of thoracolumbar or lumbar vertebral body tethering, including thoracoscopy, when performed
*If a co-surgeon is utilized for access, each surgeon will bill the same code(s) on the claim form and will append a -62 modifier to the primary tethering code. Each surgeon will be paid a total of 125% of the fee schedule split between each of them (i.e., each will receive 62.5% of the fee schedule)	

Important Notes About These Codes:

- The spinal regions listed above are based on the curve location; not the levels implanted. Curve location is defined based on the apex of the curve, which is usually the middle of the segments included.
 - The apex is the most lateral vertebral body (furthest from midline)
 - Thoracic curves have an apex in the thoracic spine, above the T11-T12 disc.
 - Lumbar curves have an apex in the lumbar spine below the T12-L1 disc.
 - Thoracolumbar curves have an apex at the T11-T12 disc, at T12, or at the T12-L1 disc.
 - For all three, the Cobb angle or segments included in a surgery might include thoracic and lumbar vertebrae.
- Fusion and instrumentation at the same level are included in the VBT codes and cannot be billed separately: "Do not report 0656T, 0657T in conjunction with 22800, 22802, 22804, 22808, 22810, 22812 (arthrodesis codes), 22818, 22819 (kyphectomy codes), 22845, 22846, 22847" (anterior instrumentation codes) (Same reference applies to the new Category I codes).
- The following procedures are considered to be included in the VBT codes and cannot be billed separately: Thoracoscopy; Repair of the pleura, if needed; Removal of a rib, if needed.
- For example, if VBT is conducted:
 - For a T5-L1 VBT, apex is likely at T9: thoracic curve. Use Category I code.
 - For a T3-L3, apex is also likely at T9: thoracic curve. Use Category I code.
 - For a T10-L4 VBT, apex is likely at L1: lumbar curve. Use Category III code.
 - For a T9-L3 VBT, apex is likely at T12: thoracolumbar curve. Use Category III code.
 - For a double curve in which the upper curve is thoracic, CPT code 22836 would be submitted for the thoracic tethering on one side, and CPT code 0656T would be submitted for the lumbar or thoracolumbar tethering on the other side.

Hospital Inpatient: ICD-10-PCS Code and Description

Insertion (Putting in a nonbiological appliance that monitors, assists, performs, or prevents a physiological function but does not physically take the place of a body part.)

∅ Medical and Surgical P Upper Bones S Reposition

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
4 Thoracic Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	3 Spinal Stabilization Device, Vertebral Body Tether	Z No Qualifier
∅ Medical and Surgical P Upper Bones S Reposition			
Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
∅ Lumbar Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	3 Spinal Stabilization Device, Vertebral Body Tether	Z No Qualifier

Hospital Inpatient: ICD-10-PCS Code and Description (continued)

Removal (Taking out or off a device from a body part. If a device is taken out and a similar device put in without cutting or puncturing the skin or mucous membrane, the procedure is coded to the root operation CHANGE. Otherwise, the procedure for taking out the device is coded to the root operation REMOVAL.)

∅ Medical and Surgical P Upper Bones S Reposition

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
∅ Thoracic Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	4 Internal Fixation Device	Z No Qualifier
∅ Medical and Surgical Q Lower Bones P Removal			
Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
∅ Lumbar Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	4 Internal Fixation Device	Z No Qualifier

Revision (Correcting, to the extent possible, a portion of a malfunctioning device or the position of a displaced device)

∅ Medical and Surgical P Upper Bones S Reposition

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
4 Thoracic Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	4 Internal Fixation Device	Z No Qualifier
∅ Medical and Surgical P Upper Bones S Reposition			
Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
∅ Lumbar Vertebra	∅ Open 4 Percutaneous Endoscopic	4 Internal Fixation Device	Z No Qualifier

Hospital Inpatient: Medicare Severity-Diagnosis Related Group (MS-DRG)*	
MS-DRG	Description
518	Back and Neck Procedures except Spinal Fusion with MCC or Disc Device/Neurostimulator
519	Back and Neck Procedures except Spinal Fusion with CC
520	Back and Neck Procedures except Spinal Fusion without CC/MCC

CC – Complication and/or Comorbidity. MCC – Major Complication and/or Comorbidity.

*Other MS-DRGs may be applicable. MS-DRG will be determined by the patient’s diagnosis and any procedure(s) performed.

HCPCS (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System)	
Code	Description
C1889	Implantable/insertable device, not otherwise classified
L8699	Prosthetic implant, not otherwise specified

Hotline Contact Information

Tether Coding Hotline: (860) 321-1356 Option 2**

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST

Email: Tether@priahealthcare.com

**Option 1 is for The Tether Patient Access Program

For more information, visit highridgemedical.com



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