

CHAPTER 3
SECTION 4.1

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

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Authority: [32 CFR 199.4\(c\)\(2\)](#) and [\(c\)\(3\)](#)

I. DESCRIPTION

The respiratory system is the tubular and cavernous organs and structures by means of which pulmonary ventilation and gas exchange between ambient air and the blood are brought about.

II. POLICY

Medically necessary services and supplies required in the diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury involving the respiratory system are covered, subject to the provisions of DoD 6010.8-R and the provisions of the "Policy Considerations" section below.

III. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Laryngoscopy.

1. Laryngoscopy and related procedures (31515-31599) are covered. When a laryngoscopy is performed in conjunction with a bronchoscopy (31622 -31656) during the same surgical session, reimbursement will be in accordance with the multiple surgery policy as stated in [Chapter 13, Section 3.7](#).

2. Indirect laryngoscopy (31505) when billed as an independent procedure, is reimbursed on the same basis as an office visit, limited, established patient. When billed in conjunction with an office visit, reimbursement for the indirect laryngoscopy is included in the reimbursement for the office visit.

B. Bronchoscopy.

Bronchoscopy (31622-31656) is a covered service and reimbursement is the same regardless of the type of instrument used (flexible or rigid bronchoscope). When a bronchoscopy is performed in conjunction with an esophagoscopy (43200-43228) or a tracheostomy (31600-31614), reimbursement will be in accordance with the multiple surgery policy as stated in [Chapter 13, Section 3.7](#).

C. Bronchoscopy/Lobectomy.

When a bronchoscopy (31622-31656) is performed in conjunction with a lobectomy (32320, 32480-32488), the bronchoscopy will be paid at 50% of its usual allowance. If performed at the completion of the lobectomy for bronchial toilet, no additional fee will be allowed.

D. Bronchial Brushing.

The bronchial brushing technique (31622) to obtain cytologic specimens from the bronchial tree is covered. Reimbursement is included in the allowance for the bronchoscopy.

E. Transbronchial Lung Biopsy.

A transbronchial lung biopsy (31628) is a covered service. When performed in conjunction with other surgery, multiple surgery guidelines will apply.

F. Bronchopulmonary Lavage.

■ Bronchopulmonary lavage, complete (32001) or segmental, is a covered service. When performed in conjunction with other surgery, multiple surgery guidelines will apply.

G. Thoracotomy/Thoracic Surgical Procedures.

When a thoracotomy (32095-32160) is billed in conjunction with another major thoracic (chest) procedure, payment will be made only for the procedure with the highest value.

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