Guide to Intraoral Comprehensive Series of Radiographic Imaging Codes

This guide is to educate dentists and others in the dental community, on the nomenclatures and descriptors for the four “comprehensive series” radiographic imaging codes. These diagnostic imaging codes are used to document these procedures in a patient’s dental record and on a claim submission (ADA Paper Form **and** 837D HIPAA Standard Electronic Dental Claim Transaction).

Introduction

The current full entry for CDT code D0210 as published in the current *CDT* manual follows:

D0210 intraoral – comprehensive series of radiographic images
A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

The same language seen in the code D0210 descriptor is also seen in its three analogues listed below. These procedures are commonly referred to as “full mouth series” or the acronym “FMX” procedure codes. Intraoral, meaning inside the oral cavity, is the nomenclature’s key word, which means that these codes are reported only when the imaging receptor or film is placed in the patient’s oral cavity. The full set of the four “intraoral – comprehensive series…” procedure codes are in the following Diagnostic Imaging sub-subcategories:

Image Capture with Interpretation

D0210 intraoral – comprehensive series of radiographic images
A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

D0372 intraoral tomosynthesis – comprehensive series of radiographic images
A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

Image Capture Only

D0709 intraoral – comprehensive series of radiographic images – image capture only
A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

D0387 intraoral tomosynthesis – comprehensive series of radiographic images – image capture only
A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

Several Questions and Answers follow. These are intended to provide readers with insight and understanding of the procedure and appropriate documentation in patient records and on claims.

Questions and Answers

1. What is the “right number” of radiographic images that must be taken to be considered an intraoral comprehensive series of radiographic images (e.g., D0210)?

   It is the dentist who determines the type and number of images required for a comprehensive series of radiographic images as described in the nomenclature and descriptor for D0210, and the other three comprehensive series of radiographic imaging procedures.

   There is not a “magical number” or type of radiographs that determine when the “full mouth series” procedure had been delivered. The descriptor eliminated “…usually consisting of 14–22 periapical and bitewing images…” simplified the criteria for determining when code D0210 (or D0709, D0372, and D0387) is the appropriate procedure code – depending on the image capture scenario.

2. If I decide to also capture a panoramic image on the same date of service is that image considered part of the comprehensive series?

   No. A panoramic imaging procedure is considered extraoral since the film or receptor is outside the oral cavity, and would therefore be reported with its own unique CDT code (e.g., **D0330 panoramic radiographic image)**. The code D0210 nomenclature, as well as the other "comprehensive complete series" codes, clearly states that image capture is intraoral – meaning that the film or receptor is placed within the oral cavity.

3. Would code D0210 be appropriate to document the imaging procedure in the following scenarios?

   a. A patient with complete adult dentition (32 teeth) has the following 22 individual images captured – four posterior bitewings; six maxillary posterior periapicals (3 right + 3 left); six mandibular posterior periapicals (3 right + 3 left); six anterior periapicals (3 maxillary + 3 mandibular). All images capture the crowns and roots of the teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas, and alveolar bone.

      D0210 is the appropriate code to report since the images capture all of the crowns and roots of the teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas, and alveolar bone as specified in the code's descriptor.

   b. A patient presents with many missing teeth. The office captures 15 images – four periapicals of the upper edentulous ridge; seven periapicals of the lower arch; four posterior bitewings – that capture the crowns and roots of all teeth, all edentulous areas, all periapical views, and interproximal areas.

      D0210 is again the appropriate code to report since the images capture all of the crowns and roots of the teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas, and alveolar bone as specified in the code's descriptor.

   c. For a patient with a full complement of 32 teeth, the office takes a total of 10 periapical radiographs: three upper (maxillary) anterior, three lower (mandibular) anterior and one posterior in each of the four quadrants.

      Again, there is not a number of radiographs that define a comprehensive series. However, since the radiographs do not display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, and alveolar bone crest, the full mouth series procedure code D0210 would not be appropriate. The correct procedure codes are:

      D0220 intraoral – periapical first radiographic image
      (Report one D0220)

      D0230 intraoral – periapical each additional radiographic image
      (Report D0230 once in the claim service line Procedure Code field and the value 09 in the Quantity field.)

4. What is the procedural difference between code **D0210 intraoral – comprehensive series of radiographic images** and **D0372 intraoral tomosynthesis – comprehensive series of radiographic images**?

   The procedure reported with code **D0210** is established and well understood – a single image is captured on the film or sensor placed in the oral cavity, and the radiation source is outside the oral cavity. The single image two-dimensional (2D) image is studied either as a mounted film or as a digital image displayed on a monitor.

   Although tomosynthesis radiographs reported with code **D0372** also involve a sensor placed in the oral cavity and the radiation source is external, there is a difference in image capture and how it is displayed for evaluation.

   A tomosynthesis imaging procedure requires specialized x-ray imaging equipment that captures multiple low-dose digital radiographs. The multiple digital images captured are processed by special

software and hardware to produce a reconstruction that approximates a virtual 3D volume image. The 3D constructed image enables a layer-by-layer virtual dissection of the targeted anatomy that provides additional diagnostic information that is not visible on a standard 2D intraoral radiograph.

Remember…

- There is no exact number of radiographs to be taken in order to report codes D0120, D0709, D0372, or D0387 as their descriptors contain the same explanation of the procedure's nature and scope. As long as the descriptor criteria are met, a "comprehensive series" can consist of different numbers of intraoral radiographic images.

  A radiographic survey of the whole mouth intended to display the crowns and roots of all teeth, periapical areas, interproximal areas and alveolar bone including edentulous areas.

- The following definitions:

  Intraoral image: A visual representation of the mouth derived by placing a film, plate, or sensor within the mouth.

  tomography: An X-ray technique that produces an image representing a detailed cross section of tissue structures at a predetermined depth.

  tomosynthesis: The creation of a 3D image by digital processing of multiple radiographic images.

Questions or Assistance?

Call 800-621-8099 or send an email to dentalcode@ada.org

Notes:

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