

Topic: PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTS

---

This notice outlines the coding guidelines for billing Pulmonary Function Tests.

1. Pulmonary Function Tests (PFTs):

PFTs are diagnostic procedures that measure the respiratory system's functional status. Typically it is comprised of the following: Spirometry, Lung Volume, Diffusion Capacity, Lung compliance, and Pulmonary Studies during Exercise Testing. The following CPT services that are included in this guideline are:

**Spirometry:**

- 94010 – Spirometry, including graphic record, total and timed vital capacity, expiratory flow rate measurement(s), with or without maximal voluntary ventilation.
- 94375 - Respiratory flow volume loop (FVL). (It includes the spirometric service to accomplish the complete FVL)
- 94060 - Bronchodilation responsiveness, Spirometry as in 94010, pre- and post-bronchodilator administration

**Lung Volume:**

- 94240 - Functional residual capacity or residual volume: helium method, nitrogen open circuit method or other method.
- 94260 - Thoracic gas volume
- 94360 - Determination of resistance to airflow, oscillatory or plethysmographic methods.

**Diffusion Capacity:**

- 94720 - Carbon monoxide diffusing capacity (e.g., single breath, steady state)

**Lung Compliance:**

- 94750 – Pulmonary compliance study (e.g., plethysmography, volume and pressure measurements)

**Pulmonary Stress Testing:**

- 94620 – Pulmonary stress testing; simple (e.g., 6-minute walk test, prolonged exercise rest for bronchospasm with pre- and post-spirometry and oximetry)

## II. General Information:

- Tests must be ordered by a treating physician and used in patient care.
- Medicare does not cover screening tests for asymptomatic patients
- Medi-Cal covers screening for early, unsuspected, or asymptomatic disease, and documenting patient's baseline for later comparison.
- The technical components of the above codes require general supervision of a physician except for CPT 94060 which requires direct supervision and therefore when performed, the presence of a physician in the office suite and immediately available to furnish assistance and direction through the performance of the procedure is required.
- When billing for hospital-based services, the professional fee and the technical component must be split-billed using modifier 26 and TC, correspondingly.
- Refer to CMS LCD L28295 for Medicare allowed ICD-9-CM corresponding to the above CPT codes. Medi-Cal does not specify ICD-9-CM codes allowed for PFT reimbursement but medical indications for PFT are outlined in the Medi-Cal manual.

## III. Required documentation:

- Treating physician's order
- Diagnostic indications to support medical necessity
- Physician interpretation of results

## IV. Billing and Coding:

- **Spirometry:**  
It measures the amount of air breathe in and out over a specified amount of time. If simple spirometry is performed, e.g., only expiratory rate is graphed, or the FVL is not complete, use CPT 94010. If Flow Volume Loop (FVL) is displayed without bronchodilator administration, use CPT 94375. If FLV is performed pre and post Bronchodilator administration, use CPT 94060.

Note: CPT 94010 is bundled with CPT 94375.  
CPT 94010 and 94375 are bundled with CPT 94060.

- **Lung Volume:**  
Lung volume is measured using the nitrogen washout, helium dilution or plethysmographic method. This includes measurement of the total lung capacity, residual volume, and functional residual capacity. Functional residual capacity (FRC) refers to the amount of air in the lung in the resting, end-expiratory position. If FRC is measured using the Helium or Nitrogen gas technique, use CPT 94240. If this lung volume is measured by plethysmography, it is sometimes termed as thoracic gas volume (TGV). CPT 94260 is used for TGV. Since Medi-Cal does not include this code with their covered lung volume measurement, use CPT 94240 when billing Medi-Cal.

- **Diffusing Capacity:**  
The single-breath carbon monoxide diffusion capacity (DLCO) measures the ability of oxygen and carbon dioxide to exchange between lung and bloodstream. CPT 94720 is the appropriate code for this procedure.
- **Lung Compliance:**  
It is the lung volume change per unit of pressure change. It measures the elastic/recoil/stiffness of the lungs where a patient is required to swallow an esophageal balloon. Use CPT code 94750 for lung compliance testing.
- **Pulmonary stress testing:**  
Simple pulmonary stress testing allows the quantification of workload and heart rate activity, while measuring the degree of oxygen desaturation. It is typically performed as a 6-minute hall walk. This procedure is coded using CPT 94620.

Note: CPT code 94060 may be considered a component of CPT code 94620, however, Modifier 59 may be utilized with 94060, if performed and clearly documented as a medically necessary separately identifiable service.

## **RESOURCES:**

CMS LCD for Pulmonary Function Testing (L28295)  
American College of Chest Physicians' Coding for Chest Medicine 2009, Chapter 15  
CPT Assistant, March 1999, Volume 9, Issue 3, page 10  
Medi-Cal Manual, Part II, Medicine: Pulmonary (medne pul)  
2008 Physician Fee Schedule (Physician supervision requirements)  
Decision Health Custom Coder response to May 26, 2009 Ask the Expert