

Format and Conventions and Current Coding Practices for ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS

CHAPTER 7 Introduction to the ICD-10-PCS Classification

CODE CHARACTERS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

Character 5: Approach

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The fifth character refers to the technique or approach used to reach the procedure site (e.g., open). Seven approaches are listed in the Medical and Surgical Section. Approaches can be external, through the skin or mucous membrane, or through an orifice. The following list breaks down the approaches.

- External
- Through the skin or mucous membrane
 - Open
 - Percutaneous
 - Percutaneous endoscopic
- Through an orifice
 - Via natural or artificial opening
 - Via natural or artificial opening endoscopic
 - Via natural or artificial opening with percutaneous endoscopic assistance

As with root operations, each approach is precisely defined in the classification. Refer to table 7.4 for the approaches shown in the Medical and Surgical Section, along with their corresponding values and definitions, and to [figure 7.5](#) for illustrations of surgical approaches.

TABLE 7.4 Medical and Surgical Section Approaches

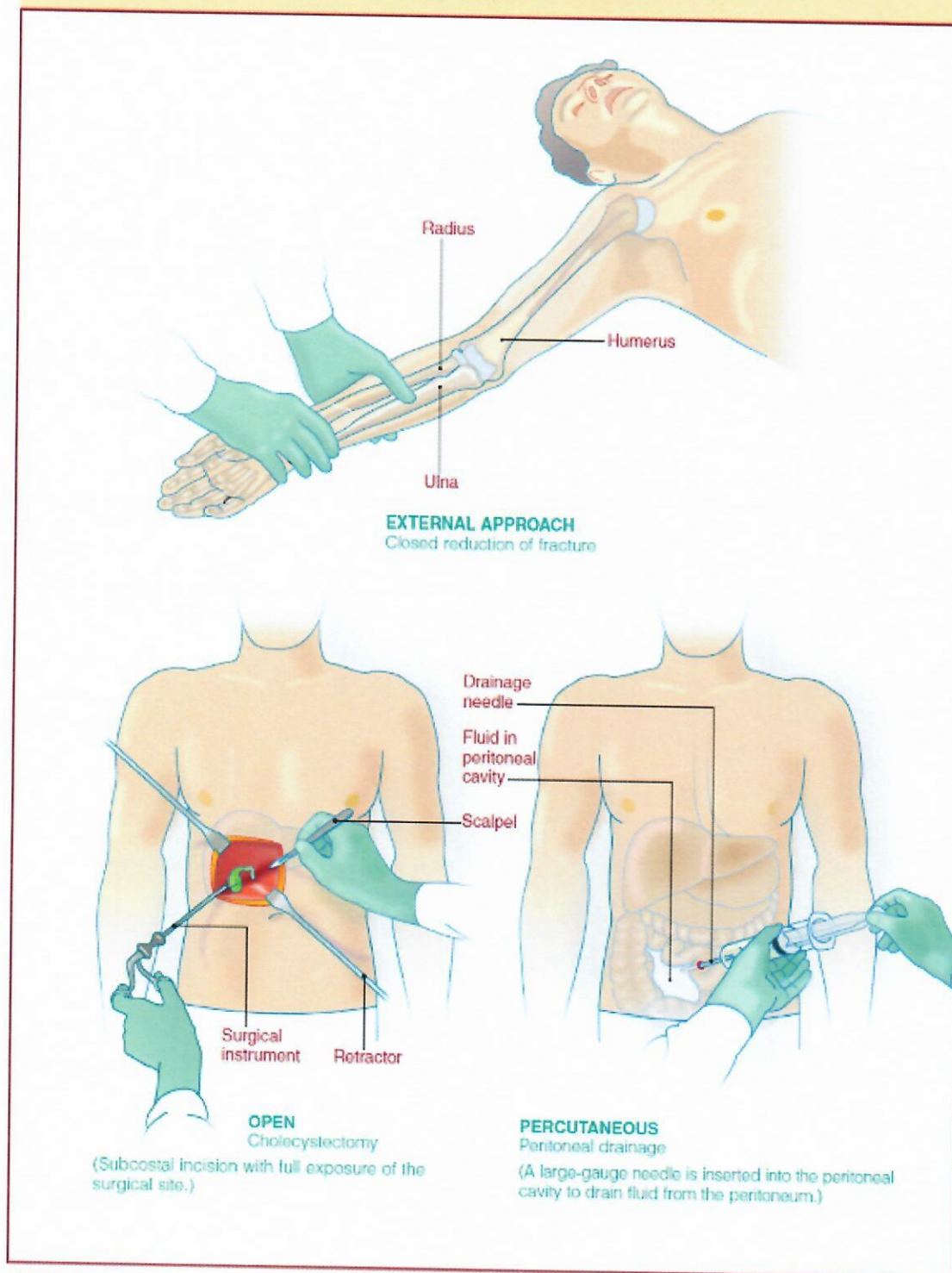
Value	Approach	Definition
X	External	Procedures performed directly on the skin or mucous membrane and procedures performed indirectly by the application of external force through the skin or mucous membrane
0	Open	Cutting through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to expose the site of the procedure
3	Percutaneous	Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and/or any other body layers necessary to reach the site of the procedure
4	Percutaneous endoscopic	Entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and/or any other body layers necessary to reach and visualize the site of the procedure
7	Via natural or artificial opening	Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach the site of the procedure
8	Via natural or artificial opening endoscopic	Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening to reach and visualize the site of the procedure
F	Via natural or artificial opening with percutaneous endoscopic assistance	Entry of instrumentation through a natural or artificial external opening, and entry, by puncture or minor incision, of instrumentation through the skin or mucous membrane and any other body layers necessary to aid in the performance of the procedure

In addition to the approach definitions listed in table 7.4, there are a handful of guidelines related to the selection of the approach, as follows:

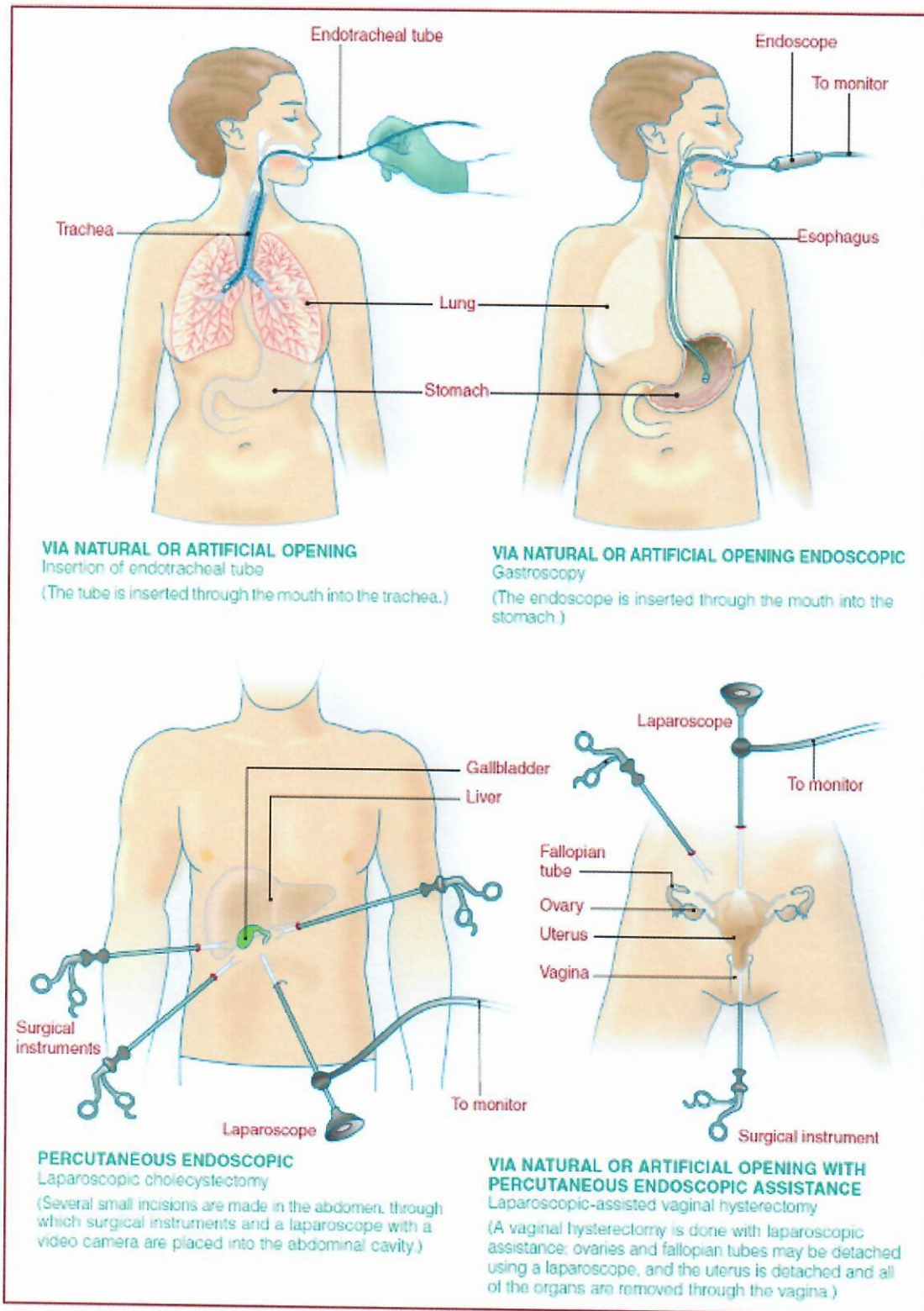
- *Open approach with percutaneous endoscopic assistance:* code to "open" approach. Example: **laparoscopic-assisted** sigmoidectomy is coded to "open."
- *Percutaneous endoscopic approach with extension of incision.* Procedures performed using the percutaneous endoscopic approach, with incision or extension of an incision to assist in the removal of all or a portion of a body part or to anastomose a tubular body part to complete the procedure, are coded to the approach value Percutaneous Endoscopic. *Examples:* **Laparoscopic** sigmoid colectomy with extension of stapling port for removal of specimen and direct anastomosis is coded to the approach value percutaneous endoscopic.
- *External approach.* The following procedures should be coded to "external":
 - Procedures performed within an orifice on structures that are visible without the aid of any instrumentation. Example: resection of tonsils.
 - Procedures performed indirectly by the application of external force through the intervening body layers. Example: closed reduction of fracture.

- *Percutaneous procedure via device*: Code to "percutaneous." Example: fragmentation of kidney stone via percutaneous nephrostomy.

FIGURE 7.5 Illustrations of Medical and Surgical Section Approaches



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EXERCISE 7.3