

## Excerpt-Dental Insurance Coding Handbook-2005

### D4249 Clinical Crown Lengthening-Hard Tissue

The ADA description, "This procedure is employed to allow restorative procedure or crown with little or no tooth structure exposed to the oral cavity. Crown lengthening requires reflection of a flap and is performed in a healthy periodontal environment, as opposed to osseous surgery which is performed in the presence of periodontal disease. Where there are adjacent teeth, the flap design may involve a larger surgical area."

*Author's guide:*

*Previously the ADA definition included the information that crown lengthening in areas involving adjacent teeth would involve a "minimum of three teeth". Now the wording is more ambiguous, "a larger surgical area".*

*This procedure is performed when the crown of a tooth is severely reduced due to decay or breakage. When the crown of a tooth is too short, it is often not possible to place a properly retentive restoration or one that does not impinge on the biologic width, considered to be a minimum of 3mm of the gingiva and/or alveolar bone. In other words, if the crown of a tooth is too short, a restoration will not have sufficient retention or strength to be maintained, plus the normal anatomical tendency for the tissues to return to a certain level or amount of gingiva and bone may result in periodontal problems. Osseous recontouring must re-create a 3mm distance between a crown's margins and the alveolar crest. Impingement of the biologic width can also cause unresolved interproximal inflammation months after a restoration is placed. Crown lengthening prevents and/or corrects this. It always occurs in a healthy environment as opposed to osseous surgery which is performed in the presence of disease.*

*A narrative can facilitate insurance payment. For example: "Tooth #19 presented with broken cusps on the mesial and distal, and caries extending subgingivally. Osseous recontouring was performed on three teeth, #18, #19, and #20 for crown lengthening needed for restoration of #19."*

*A few carriers will allow a benefit for this procedure, but may have a time requirement between the D4249 and the final restoration. In other words, crown lengthening performed on the same day as a crown preparation might not be covered. Soft tissue recontouring also does not qualify for D4249. Bone must be involved.*

*Some carriers will base their benefit on their fee for a quadrant of osseous surgery. Include radiographs and periodontal charting with the claim.*

*Note: The AAP considers D4249 to involve a minimum of three teeth. See Current Procedural Terminology for Periodontitis and Insurance Reporting Manual, Ninth Edition, Revised 2003, page 66.*