

Colon Surgical Site Infections

Infection Present at the Time of Surgery (PATOS) – excludes case from list of reportable surgical site infections. PATOS documentation should be used in operative dictation whenever applicable. PATOS verbiage is incredibly specific and must be documented appropriately.

Examples of PATOS vs NOT PATOS:

WORDS THAT INDICATE PATOS

- Examples that indicate evidence of infection include but are not limited to: abscess, infection, purulence/pus, phlegmon, or “feculent peritonitis” documented in the operative report.

WORDS THAT DO NOT INDICATE PATOS

- The following verbiage alone without specific mention of infection does not meet the PATOS definition: colon perforation, contamination, necrosis, gangrene, fecal spillage, nicked bowel during procedure, or a note of inflammation.
- Wound class cannot be used for PATOS determination.
- The use of the ending “itis” in an operative note/report of surgery does not necessarily meet PATOS, as it may only reflect inflammation which is not infectious in nature (e.g. diverticulitis, peritonitis, and appendicitis).
- Trauma resulting in a contaminated case does not necessarily meet the PATOS requirement. For example, a fresh gunshot wound to the abdomen may be a trauma with a high wound class but there would not be time for infection to develop. However, remember that documentation of feculent peritonitis when present does exclude the case.

Note: PATOS only applies to the depth of the SSI that is being attributed to the procedure. For example: multiple abscesses are documented at the time of surgery and the patient develops a superficial SSI (wound infection). This case would not be excluded since PATOS was at a different level from the infection site.