

Obesity documentation guidelines

To capture the full disease burden of a patient's obesity, follow the documentation guidelines below.

Coding clarifications

BMI cannot be reported without a diagnosis with MEAT support associated with it.

- Coding cannot make clinical assumptions for a diagnosis; it must be documented by the provider.
- Documentation of an obese *abdomen* does not generate a diagnosis of obesity.

BMI chart

| BMI | Associated condition |
|------------------------|---|
| Less than 18.5 | Underweight |
| 18.5 - 24.99 | Normal |
| 25.0 - 29.9 | Overweight |
| 30.0 to less than 34.9 | Class 1 Obesity (Overweight) |
| 35.0 - 39.9 | Class 2 Obesity (Obesity) |
| 40 or greater | Class 3 Obesity (Extreme/Severe/Morbid Obesity) |

Documentation guidelines

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| <p>Do: Provide supporting documentation with a diagnosis of 'obesity' in the visit note.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of 'obese' in the exam needs to be specified with MEAT to capture this diagnosis. | <p>Do document: Weight related conditions such as hypothyroidism as related to BMI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other examples include Alveolar hypoventilation/ Pickwickian Syndrome or Prader-Willi syndrome. |
| <p>Do: Include a weight-related diagnosis with a reported BMI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ex: Obesity, Morbid obesity, Severe obesity, Class 3 obesity as appropriate</i> • Document conditions contributing to obesity (ex: due to excess calories) • According to ICD-10-CM Coding Guidelines "BMI codes should only be assigned when there is an associated, reportable diagnosis." • BMI code alone cannot be supported by the weight related diagnoses code. | <p>Do document: Drug-induced obesity (Iatrogenic obesity) with medication name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document other adverse effects of the medication. |
| <p>Do document: Morbid obesity if the BMI is ≥ 35 and the patient has one or more related co-morbid conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link co-morbid conditions, as appropriate. | <p>Do document: Weight management or weight loss recommendations/ strategies provided as part of treatment plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The patient was educated on the importance of healthy eating choices and regular exercise. They were referred to a nutritionist. |
| <p>Do document: Weight gain associated to fluid retention/overload or correlating conditions.</p> | <p>Do document: Muscular body composition contributing to high BMI.</p> |

References:

1. Sheri Poe Bernard Ccs-P. CDEO CPC CRC. *Risk Adjustment Documentation & Coding*, 2nd Edition. American Medical Association Press, pp.218-222.
2. Prescott, L., Manz, J., Reiter, A. (2023). *2023 ACDIS Outpatient Pocket Guide The essential CDI Resource for Outpatient Professionals* (pp. 177-180).: HCPro, a Simplify Compliance Brand.