

Obesity & BMI Coding Tips



BMI < 19.9 Underweight | BMI 20.0 - 24.9 Healthy Weight | BMI 25 - 29.9 Overweight
 BMI 30 - 34.9 Obese | BMI 35 - 39.9 (With Co-Morbidities)
 BMI ≥ 40 Morbidly Obese

Patients with a large waist circumference from increased abdominal fat can be diagnosed as obese even if they have a healthy BMI¹

ICD-10 Official Guidelines ²	Document	Remember
<p>BMI may be documented by any clinician.</p> <p>The treating provider must be the one to document obesity, morbid obesity, or any other diagnosis-related code from a BMI measurement.</p> <p>BMI codes should only be reported as a secondary diagnosis code.</p> <p>BMI has no meaning without an associated diagnosis, such as obesity.³</p> <p>Coders and billers cannot infer obesity from a BMI value.</p>	<p>Documentation must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of exam • Weight • BMI <p>Documentation should include specific details of the cause and extent of obesity like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to excess calories • Endocrine related • Morbid/Severe 	<p>State the clinical significance of obesity on the patient's health.</p> <p>Possible complications and co-morbidities include⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes • Disorder of lipid proteins • Heart disease • Respiratory problems • Osteoarthritis <p>Individuals who are overweight, obese or morbidly obese are at an increased risk for certain medical conditions when compared to persons of normal weight. Therefore, these conditions are always clinically significant and reportable when documented by the provider⁵.</p>

References and Notes

¹<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/overweight-and-obesity>

²<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Downloads/2019-ICD10-Coding-Guidelines-.pdf>

³Report on Medicare Compliance, Volume 26 Number 14 pg. 2. April 24, 2017

⁴<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/overweight-and-obesity>

⁵AHA Coding Clinic, 3rd quarter 2011, Vol. 28, Num. 3, pages 4-5

This educational material complies with accepted 2018 ICD-10-CM practices and guidelines and is for general supplemental purposes only. The information is not guaranteed to be complete, free of errors, or the most current revision. It is the responsibility of the provider to document accurate and complete codes, clinical rationale and medical services rendered to support appropriate ICD-10 code(s) according to official billing and coding guidelines, procedures, and regulations.

For additional resources, contact our Provider Relations team at Providers@ARHealthWellness.com