

# ICD-10-CM Guidelines

Third-party payers require that an ICD-10-CM code(s) be submitted on each laboratory claim at the highest level of specificity (HLS). Failure to provide the official ICD-10-CM code(s) may result in denied or delayed claims. This document contains important information to consider when assigning ICD-10-CM codes.

Indicate on the test request form (TRF) the appropriate ICD-10-CM code(s) to identify diagnoses, signs, symptoms, conditions, complaints, or other reason(s) for the laboratory test(s) ordered for the date of service.
<b>The principal diagnosis should be listed first in ICD-10-CM format.</b>
Additional diagnosis codes for all documented coexisting conditions that require or affect patient care or management should be listed after the principal diagnosis.
ICD-10-CM is composed of codes with 3-7 characters. Codes with 3 characters are included in ICD-10-CM as standalone codes or as the heading of a category of codes that are further subdivided by the use of fourth, fifth, and sixth characters and a seventh character extension that provide greater specificity. The first character of a three-character category is always a letter (A-Z); the second and third characters may be numbers or alpha characters; and the fourth through seventh characters can be any combination of letters and numbers. In instances when a letter or number is not an option for the fourth, fifth, or sixth characters, the letter "X" is used as a placeholder to allow future expansion without disturbing the coding structure. <b>ICD-10-CM Code Structure</b> <b>Category Code:</b> A three-character category without further subclassification is a valid three-character code. However, most three-character category codes require additional characters. — Example: T56 — Toxic effects of metals (not at HLS)* <b>Subcategory Code:</b> fourth and fifth character — Example: T56.0X — Toxic effect of lead and its compounds (not at HLS)* <b>Sub-subcategory Code:</b> sixth character — Example: T56.0X1 — Toxic effect of lead and its compounds, accidental (unintentional) (not at HLS)* <b>Extension Code:</b> seventh character — Example: T56.0X1A — Toxic effect of lead and its compounds, accidental (unintentional), initial encounter (at HLS)*. "A" is used as an extension character in the seventh position with the letter "X" used as a placeholder in the fifth position.
ICD-10-CM codes are to be used at their highest level of specificity, eg, Assign 3-character codes only if there are no 4, 5, or 6-character codes within that code subcategory Assign 4, 5, and 6-character subcategory codes only if there is no 7-character extension for that category Assign 7-character extension for those categories where it exists Assign placeholder "X" if a 7-character extension is needed and there are no 4, 5, or 6 characters within that code subcategory
Uncertain diagnoses such as "probable," "suspected," "questionable," or "rule out" should not be coded. Instead, code the signs, symptoms, abnormal test results, and/or reason(s) for the patient encounter. <b>Example:</b> "Nausea with vomiting to rule out appendicitis" may be coded R11.2 — Nausea with vomiting, unspecified*
Z codes represent reasons for encounters and are provided to address occasions when circumstances other than a disease or injury occur and are recorded as "diagnoses" or "problems." This can arise mainly in two ways: 1. A person who may or may not be sick encounters the health services for some specific purpose, such as to receive limited care or service for a current condition, to donate an organ or tissue, to receive prophylactic vaccination (immunization), or to discuss a problem which is in itself not a disease or injury. <b>Example:</b> Z23 — Encounter for immunization* <b>Example:</b> Z79.01 — Long term (current) use of anticoagulants* 2. Some circumstance or problem is present that influences the person's health status but is not in itself a current illness or injury. <b>Example:</b> Z34.80 — Encounter for supervision of other normal pregnancy, unspecified trimester*
S and T codes are for the classification of injury and poisoning. Most S and T codes require a seventh character extension. <b>Example:</b> T45.515A — Adverse effect of anticoagulants, initial encounter*
U codes are for the classification of special purposes. <b>Example:</b> U07.1 — COVID-19*
V, W, X, and Y codes are a supplementary classification of external causes of morbidity. V, W, X, and Y codes indicate the classification of environmental events and circumstances as the cause of injury and other adverse effects. These codes should never be sequenced as the first-listed or principal diagnosis. <b>Example:</b> V03.10XA — Pedestrian on foot injured in a collision with car, pick-up truck or van in traffic accident, initial encounter*
For more comprehensive instructions, please refer to ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting.

Providing necessary billing information at the time of service saves valuable time for physician office staff in follow-up requests and assures that patient claims are processed in a timely manner.

\*Examples are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to suggest the use of a particular ICD-10-CM code for any patient encounter.

