

Dementia

Dementia is a progressive and degenerative neurological disorder that affects cognitive functions such as memory, thinking, language, and behavior. It is a group of symptoms resulting from the damage or death of brain cells.

Dementia is classified into three main categories based on its etiology

1. Vascular Dementia (F01.-). Caused by infarction or other cerebrovascular disease.

F01.50	Vascular dementia
F01.518	Vascular dementia with behavioral disturbances
F01.3	Mixed vascular dementia

2. Dementia in Diseases Classified Elsewhere (F02.-). Requires Etiology/Manifestation coding, with the etiology coded first. Examples include:

G20	Parkinson's Disease	G30.1	Alzheimer's Disease with Late Onset
G30.0	Alzheimer's Disease with Early Onset	G31.83	Dementia/Neurocognitive Disorder with Parkinsonism or Lewy Bodies

3. Dementia, Unspecified (F03.-). Used to represent dementia Not Otherwise Specified (NOS).

Note: A dash (-) indicates that additional characters are required to complete the code.

Independence Blue Cross coding and documentation education materials are based on current guidelines, are to be used for reference only, and are not intended to replace the authoritative guidance of the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting as approved by the American Hospital Association (AHA), the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Clinical and coding decisions are to be made based on the following: 1. The independent judgment of the treating physician or qualified health care practitioner. 2. The best interests of the patient. 3. The clinical documentation as contained in the medical record.

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ICD-10 documentation guidance for dementia

Behavioral disturbances may accompany dementia and are classified as follows:

1. **Agitation.** Includes: Restlessness, rocking, pacing, exit-seeking, profanity, shouting, threatening, anger, aggression, combativeness, or violence.
2. **Other behavioral disturbances.** Includes: Sleep disturbances, social disinhibition, or sexual disinhibition. Use additional code Z91.83 to document wandering (if applicable).
3. **Psychotic disturbance.** Includes: Hallucinations, paranoia, suspiciousness, or delusional state.
4. **Mood disturbance.** Includes: Depression, apathy, or anhedonia.
5. **Anxiety.** As stated in the record.

Dementia severity levels

Mild	F01.A-	Clear functional impact on daily life, primarily affecting instrumental activities . The patient is no longer fully independent/requires occasional assistance with daily life activities.
	F02.A-	
	F03.A-	
Moderate	F01.B-	Extensive functional impact on daily life with impairment in basic activities . No longer independent and requires frequent assistance with daily life activities.
	F02.B-	
	F03.B-	
Severe	F01.C-	Clinical interview may not be possible. Complete dependency due to severe functional impact on daily life with impairment in basic activities, including basic self-care.
	F02.C-	
	F03.C-	

Note: A dash (-) indicates that additional characters are required to complete the code.

Documentation Best Practices

When documenting dementia, consider the following criteria:

- **Category/Type:** F01, F02, F03
- **Severity:** Mild, Moderate, Severe
- **With or Without Behavioral Disturbances**

Important note: For vascular dementia and dementia in diseases classified elsewhere, **code first** the underlying physiological condition.

References

- Contract-Level Risk Adjustment Data Validation Medical Record Reviewer Guidance In effect as of 03/20/2019. Yew, K.S. & Cheng, E.M. (2015).
- Optum (2025). ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set (2025)
- ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2025; Section I.A.15
- ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2025; Section I.C.5.d
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia/alzheimers-disease-fact-sheet>