

Morbid obesity and BMI

Morbid obesity can be defined by the following

- Being 100 pounds or more over your ideal body weight.
- Having a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or greater.
- Having a BMI of 35 or greater along with one or more co-morbidities, such as:
 - Hypertension
 - Dyslipidemia
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Coronary artery disease

ICD-10 documentation guidance for morbid obesity and BMI

A diagnosis of morbid obesity is always clinically significant and should **always** be reported. Accurate coding requires the following:

- BMI **must** always be reported with a documented weight-related diagnosis.
- Never convert a BMI code into a weight diagnosis. The provider **must** document the weight diagnosis for the BMI to be abstracted.
- A provider may state that a patient is morbidly obese even if the BMI is less than 40 but greater than 35.

Documentation best practices

- If the provider documents obesity with a BMI of 45, then obesity should be abstracted.
- If a BMI of 52 is noted with no weight-related diagnosis, the provider should be queried. If no weight diagnosis is documented, the BMI cannot be reported.
- BMI is a screening tool and does not define a person's body fat or health.
- The provider's weight-related diagnosis is the only acceptable documentation for coding morbid obesity.

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-CM codes for overweight and obesity

E66.01	Morbid (severe) obesity due to excess calories	E66.3	Overweight
E66.09	Other obesity due to excess calories	E66.8	Other obesity
E66.1	Drug-induced obesity	E66.9	Obesity, unspecified
E66.2	Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation		

ICD-10-CM codes for BMI

Z68.2-	BMI 20–29, adult	Z68.4-	BMI 40 or greater, adult
Z68.3-	BMI 30–39, adult		

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

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