

# Myocardial infarction (MI)

**A myocardial infarction (MI), commonly known as a heart attack, occurs when blood flow to the heart muscle is severely reduced or completely blocked, leading to damage or death of the heart tissue.**

This blockage is often caused by a buildup of fat, cholesterol, or other substances that form plaques in the coronary arteries. MIs are classified into different types based on their underlying cause, such as spontaneous coronary artery occlusion (type 1) or secondary to an imbalance in oxygen demand and supply (type 2).

## ICD-10 documentation guidance for myocardial infarction

<b>Documenting by type or unspecified MI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Specify the type of MI (e.g., type 1, type 2, type 4, or type 5) or clearly indicate if the MI is unspecified.</li><li>Accurate documentation is crucial for assigning the correct ICD-10-CM code.</li></ul>
<b>Acute MI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An <b>acute MI</b> is defined as an MI that is <b>equal to or less than four weeks old</b>, even if the patient is transferred to another acute care setting or post-acute care setting.</li><li>Document the <b>date of onset</b> and the <b>location of the MI</b> for accurate coding.</li></ul>
<b>Encounters after the fourth week of the initial MI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If care is <b>related to the MI</b>, assign an appropriate <b>aftercare Z-code</b> (e.g., Z48.812 for surgical aftercare of the circulatory system). Do not use the MI code from category I21.</li><li>If the MI is <b>old or healed</b> with no continued symptoms or treatment, assign ICD-10 code I25.2 (old MI).</li><li>If a <b>subsequent MI</b> occurs within the four-week timeframe of the initial MI, follow the coding rules in the next section.</li></ul>
<b>Subsequent MIs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A <b>subsequent MI</b> is defined as a new MI occurring within the <b>four-week time frame</b> of the initial MI.</li><li>Coding guidelines for subsequent MIs:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do <b>not</b> assign a code from category <b>I22</b> for subsequent myocardial infarctions unless both the initial and subsequent MIs are <b>type 1</b> or <b>unspecified</b>.</li><li>For a <b>subsequent type 2 acute MI</b>, assign only ICD-10 code <b>I21.A1</b>.</li><li>For a <b>subsequent type 4 or type 5 acute MI</b>, assign only ICD-10 code <b>I21.A9</b>.</li></ul></li><li>If a <b>subsequent MI of one type</b> occurs within four weeks of an MI of a <b>different type</b>, assign the appropriate codes from category <b>I21</b> to identify each type. Do not use a code from category <b>I22</b>.</li></ul>

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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## Documentation Best Practices

- Document the **date of onset**, to the best of your knowledge, and the **specific location** of the MI.
- Provide the **highest level of specificity and severity** to ensure accurate ICD-10 code assignment.
- Use precise terminology to describe the patient's condition, including specific diagnoses, symptoms, or reasons for the encounter.
- Assign codes from category **I22** only if both the initial and subsequent MIs are **type 1** or **unspecified**.
- For type 2, type 4, or type 5 subsequent MIs, use the appropriate code from category **I21**.

## 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.9.e
- Mills, Lorie B. Susan Sweeney, Laura Little, Abhinav Goyal. "Red Flags for Myocardial Infarctions Coding and CDI." Journal of AHIMA, no. 7 (Jul-Aug): 54-55.