

Malnutrition and Morbid Obesity

Risk Adjustment Coding Quick Guide

Morbid Obesity:

BMI should be measured on a yearly basis and during/after acute exacerbations of chronic illness.

BMI can be documented by clinician other than provider (such as an MA or LPN) but diagnosis, such as morbid obesity, must be made by provider.

If a patient has a BMI ≥ 35 in addition to one or more co-morbid conditions that can be linked to obesity, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, the patient is considered to have morbid obesity. Patients with morbid obesity should be screened for complications that commonly occur with this illness.

Documentation of BMI alone cannot be used to code or assume morbid obesity; a provider must document the medical condition of "morbid obesity" or "severe obesity" in the patient's medical record for it be coded as such.

| Diagnosis | Dx Code |
|---|-------------------|
| Morbid (severe) obesity due to excess calories | E66.01 + BMI code |
| Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation | E66.2 + BMI code |
| 40.0-44.9 Body mass index [BMI], adult | Z68.41 |
| 45.0-49.9 Body mass index [BMI], adult | Z68.42 |
| 50.0-59.9 Body mass index [BMI], adult | Z68.43 |
| 60.0-69.9 Body mass index [BMI], adult | Z68.44 |
| 70 or greater Body mass index [BMI], adult | Z68.45 |

Malnutrition:

| Diagnosis | Dx Code |
|---|---------|
| Unspecified severe protein-calorie malnutrition | E43 |
| Moderate protein-calorie malnutrition | E44.0 |
| Mild protein-calorie malnutrition | E44.1 |
| Unspecified protein-calorie malnutrition | E46 |
| Sequelae of protein-calorie malnutrition | E64.0 |
| Cachexia | R64 |

If you describe your patient as cachectic, consider including "cachexia" as a diagnosis in your assessment and plan.

Malnutrition codes cannot be coded from an RD consult, only when confirmed and diagnosed in a face-to-face encounter with a qualified provider.

Contact information: Julie Eisen, IHANY Risk Adjustment Coding Specialist eisenjr@trinity-health.org or Emily Smith, IHANY Risk Adjustment Coding Specialist, Emily.Smith002@sphp.com (Updated Nov 2021)