

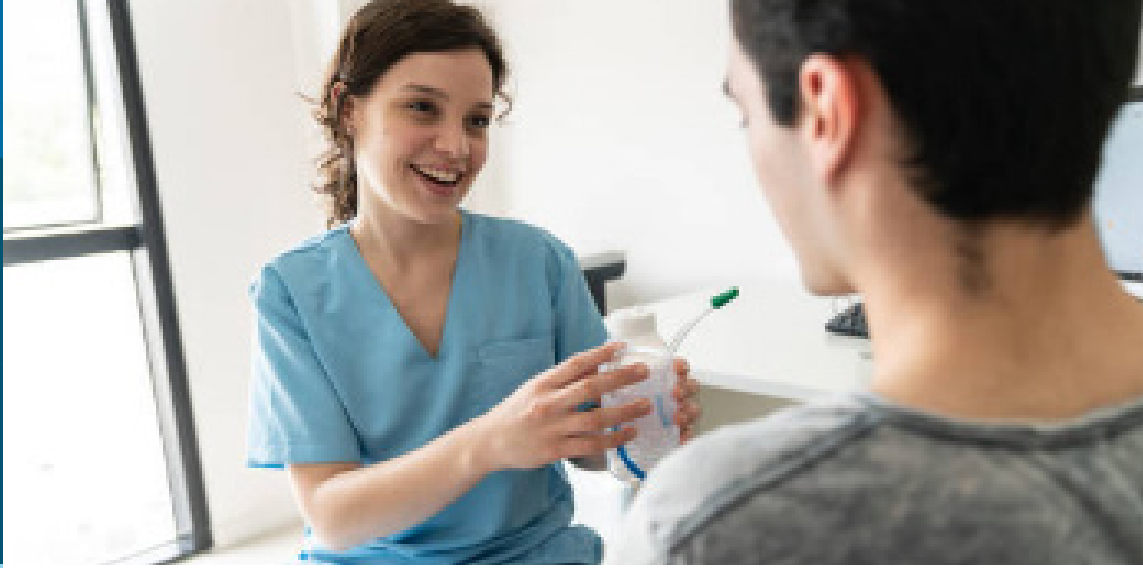


**BlueCross  
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## Coding Tips

This is one in a series of tip sheets focusing on accurate coding for specific conditions.



## MEDICAL RECORD DOCUMENTATION FOR COPD AND ASSOCIATED RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 15.7 million Americans have been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The prevalence of COPD makes it imperative to document the disease and any respiratory conditions currently associated with it to ensure the appropriate diagnosis code is applied.

The two common forms of COPD are emphysema and chronic bronchitis. However, many patients diagnosed with COPD have both emphysema **and** chronic bronchitis.

### Important tip to remember

- Always document and code to the highest level of specificity and report diagnosis codes at their highest number of characters available. For example, if a healthcare provider documents "acute bronchitis" or "chronic bronchitis" (both unspecified), then he or she would report ICD-10-CM codes J20.9 or J42, respectively. It's important to indicate, through documentation and coding, whether the condition is acute, chronic or in acute exacerbation.
- Since COPD-related conditions can be coded in a variety of ways, the final code selection must take into account the specific details of the patient's condition as documented by the health care provider.
- When COPD with an acute exacerbation is documented **without** acute bronchitis, then ICD-10-CM code J44.1 (COPD, with an acute exacerbation) is applicable.
- J44.0 (COPD with acute lower respiratory infection) is assigned when the medical record supports acute bronchitis and COPD. An additional code is used to identify the infection.
- ICD-10-CM code J44.9 (COPD, unspecified) should only be used if the information in the medical record is insufficient to assign a more specific code.

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ICD-10-CM code	ICD-10-CM Nomenclature
J41.0	Simple chronic bronchitis
J41.1	Mucopurulent chronic bronchitis
J41.8	Mixed simple and mucopurulent chronic bronchitis
J42	Unspecified chronic bronchitis
J43.9	Emphysema, unspecified
J44.-	Other Chronic Obstructive pulmonary disease J44.0 – COPD with acute lower respiratory infection J44.1 – COPD with (acute) exacerbation J44.9 – COPD, unspecified
J45.-	Asthma (additional fifth and/or sixth characters required) J42.2 – Mild intermittent asthma J45.3 – Mild persistent asthma J45.4 – Moderate persistent asthma J45.5 – Severe persistent asthma J45.9 – Other and unspecified asthma
J96.10	Chronic respiratory failure, unspecified
J96.11	Chronic respiratory failure with hypoxia
J96.12	Chronic respiratory failure with hypercapnia

It's important to review the *ICD-10-CM Chapter Specific Coding Guidelines* "Chapter 10: Diseases of Respiratory System J00-J99" and any instructional notes under the various COPD subcategories and codes in the tabular list of the ICD-10-CM manual to select the correct code. In addition to the codes listed above, you may need to use additional codes to identify current or previous tobacco usage and dependence, or other environmental exposure.

\*Use additional codes to identify:

- Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke – Z77.22
- History of tobacco dependence – Z87.891
- Exposure to tobacco in the perinatal period – P96.81

**Note:** ICD-10-CM coding for all conditions should follow the *ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting*.

**Questions?** Contact Blue Cross VT Risk Adjustment at [riskadjustment@bcbsvt.com](mailto:riskadjustment@bcbsvt.com) or at **(802)-371-3540**.

ICD-10-CM diagnostic codes and the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting are subject to change. It's the responsibility of the provider to ensure that current ICD-10-CM diagnostic codes and the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting are reviewed prior to the submission of claims.

Keep in mind that none of the information included in this document is intended to be legal advice and, as such, it remains the provider's responsibility to ensure that all the coding and documentation are done in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.