



Chronic Condition Coding Awareness: Asthma

Asthma

Asthma, sometimes called bronchial asthma or reactive airway disease², is a chronic lung disease that makes it harder to move air in and out of the lungs¹. It can be serious, life threatening, and start at any age. With asthma, swollen airways become extra sensitive to things that one is exposed to in the environment every day—asthma “triggers.” When a trigger is breathed in, the airways create extra mucus and swell even more, making it harder to breathe².

Symptoms of Asthma

Asthma symptoms include coughing (especially at night), wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness, pain, or pressure². Understanding the experiences or exposures that make the asthma flare-up is a key step to better managing the disease.

Treatment of Asthma

Treatment for asthma may include inhalers, oral medications, and drugs delivered in a nebulizer or breathing machine². Making a plan to avoid or limit the environmental exposure to asthma triggers can eliminate asthma symptoms and help control the disease¹.

Asthma Coding Guidance

TIPS:	ICD-10 Mapping & Education
➤ ICD-10-CM	J45.20 – J45.998 (Asthma) ³
➤ Documentation should specify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequency (intermittent, persistent) ○ Severity (mild, moderate, severe) ○ Exacerbation or decompensation ○ Environmental factors
➤ Use additional code...	<p>... to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (Z77.22) ○ Exposure to tobacco smoke in the perinatal period (P96.81) ○ History of tobacco dependence (Z87.891) ○ Occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (Z57.31) ○ Tobacco dependence (F17.-) or Tobacco use (Z72.0)
➤ Avoid terms such as “history of” ...	<p>... if patient is still being monitored for the condition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Incorrect</u> wording: <i>Patient has history of asthma.</i> ○ <u>Correct</u> wording: <i>Patient has asthma with no recent onset to exacerbation. Current medication includes albuterol inhaler.</i>
➤ Additional Coding Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bronchitis (J40): too general, identify acute or chronic. ○ COPD with asthmatic conditions: code both the COPD & Asthma. ○ Smoker’s cough (J41.0): do not use bronchitis code.
➤ Documentation Tips	<p>The following language supports actively monitoring [any] condition and must be documented by the provider. In the documentation, mention...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medications reviewed and are current. ○ If patient is seeing a specialist. ○ Whether there has been any or no recent onset to exacerbation.

1. American Lung Association (<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/learn-about-asthma/>)
2. WebMD: Asthma Health Center (<http://www.webmd.com/asthma/default.htm>)
3. 2017 ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set, Optum360. 2016 Optum360, LLC