



Chronic Condition Coding Awareness: **Autistic Disorder**

Autistic Disorder

Autism is a brain disorder that limits a person's ability to communicate and relate to other people². Also known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), the term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person¹. Some people can navigate their world, some have exceptional abilities, while others struggle to speak².

Symptoms of Autism

Signs of ASD tend to appear between 2 and 3 years of age and can include repeated motions and/or words, avoiding eye contact or physical touch, delays in learning to talk, and getting upset by minor changes². Additionally, some people with autism can experience physical symptoms such as constipation, sleep problems, poor coordination of muscles, and seizures². These signs, however, can also occur in children without ASD and at any age^{1,2}. It is important that caregivers talk with a healthcare provider to request a screening for autism.

Treatment of Autism

Treatment for ASD is dependent on screening results. A diagnosis of autism is not needed for people to begin receiving services related to developmental delays or learning challenges¹. Nonetheless treatments offered include behavior programs, individualized education program (IEP), medication, sensory processing, assistive technology, and diet².

Autistic Disorder Coding Guidance

| TIPS: | ICD-10 Mapping & Education |
|---|---|
| ➤ ICD-10-CM | F84.0 (Autistic disorder) ³ |
| ➤ Use additional code... | <p>... to identify any associated <u>medical condition</u> such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constipation ○ Sleep problems ○ Poor coordination of muscles ○ Seizures <p>...and intellectual disabilities such as <u>IQ</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>F70</i> Mild (IQ 50-69) ○ <i>F71</i> Moderate (IQ 35-49) ○ <i>F72</i> Severe (IQ 20-34) ○ <i>F73</i> Profound (IQ under 20) ○ <i>F78</i> Other intellectual disabilities ○ <i>F79</i> Unspecified intellectual disabilities ○ <i>R41.83</i> Borderline intellectual functioning (IQ above 70-84) |
| ➤ 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 <u>history of</u> autism.</i> ○ <u>Correct</u> wording: <i>Patient has autism and continues medication.</i> |
| ➤ Documentation & Coding 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"> ○ if the patient is receiving therapy. ○ getting a refill on medication. ○ the status of the condition. |

1. Autism Speaks: What is Autism? (<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism>)
2. WebMD: What is Autism? (<http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/ss/slideshow-autism-overview>)
3. 2017 ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians: The Complete Official Code Set, Optum360. 2016 Optum360, LLC

Updated 5/4/18