

ICD-10-CM Documentation and Coding Best Practices

Protein-calorie malnutrition

Overview

Protein-calorie malnutrition is a serious condition in which the body does not receive enough nutrients for proper function.

Types of malnutrition

- Under nutrition – not getting enough nutrients (lack of food)
 - Stunting (low height for age)
 - Wasting (low weight for height)
 - Underweight (low weight for age)
 - Micronutrient deficiencies
 - Insufficiencies (lack of important vitamins and minerals)
- Over nutrition-getting more nutrients than you need (poor diet)
 - Obesity
 - Diet-related non-communicable disease (heart disease, stroke, DM, cancer)

Associated Conditions

- Cystic Fibrosis
- COPD
- CKD
- CHF
- Cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease

Levels of severity

- Mild (first degree)
- Moderate (second degree)
- Severe (third degree)
 - Kwashiorkor (*most often seen in third world countries*)
 - Skin and hair pigment changes
 - edema
 - slow growth
 - Nutritional marasmus (*most often seen in third world countries*)
 - wasting overall from a lack of nutrients
 - protein
 - carbohydrates
 - Cachexia
 - loss of weight/significant loss of appetite/muscle wasting
 - fatigue/weakness

Documentation and coding guidance

- Based on the provider's clinical judgement, document the physical/clinical findings that lead to the diagnosis of malnutrition – i.e., loss of appetite, muscle wasting, etc.

- Document the severity (mild, moderate, severe)
- Document risk factors and/or associated conditions
 - Cancer
 - AIDS
 - End-stage disease process
- Document biochemical markers lab values (low albumin, transferrin, BUN/Creatinine ratio)
- Document associated conditions (cancer, AIDS, end-stage disease process, etc.)
- Document Body Mass Index
- Document a treatment plan

For adult malnutrition, no single parameter is definitive, the identification of two or more of the following six characteristics is recommended for diagnosis:

- Insufficient energy intake
- Weight loss
- Loss of muscle mass
- Loss of subcutaneous fat
- Localized or generalized fluid accumulation that may sometimes mask weight loss
- Diminished functional status as measured by hand-grip strength

ICD-10-CM Codes	Code Description	Examples of diagnostic criteria
E44.0	Moderate Protein-Calorie Malnutrition	(Second degree) by superimposed biochemical changes in electrolytes, lipids, blood plasma
E44.1	Mild Protein-Calorie Malnutrition	First degree) by tissue wasting in an adult, but few or no biochemical changes
E43	Severe Protein-Calorie Malnutrition	(Third degree) occurs when adequate protein or calories are not received for normal growth, body maintenance, and the energy necessary for ordinary activities
E45	Retarded Development Following Protein-Calorie Malnutrition	Nutritional stunting or short stature, physical retardation due to malnutrition
E46	Unspecified Protein-Calorie Malnutrition	Malnutrition NOS Protein-calorie imbalance NOS
R64	Cachexia	Wasting syndrome, general ill health and poor nutrition. Code first underlying condition, if known

