

Congestive heart failure

Documentation and coding: Individual & Family Plans

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For coding education questions, email CignaHealthcareHCPEducation@CignaHealthcare.com.

It's important to accurately document and code diagnoses when submitting claims for your patients with Cigna Healthcare-administered coverage. This helps ensure your diagnosis and coding practices comply with all applicable legal requirements,¹ while enabling us to provide our customers with the benefits and resources they need. For additional information and resources, visit the Cigna Healthcare Individual & Family Plans page at CignaforHCP.com/IFP.

The information that follows is designed to provide guidance for the documentation and coding of claims for your patients with a congestive heart failure diagnosis. It is not meant to replace your judgment when caring for your patients.

Definition

Congestive heart failure (CHF), often referred to as heart failure, is a complex clinical syndrome characterized by current or prior characteristic symptoms, such as dyspnea and fatigue, and evidence of cardiac dysfunction as a cause of these symptoms.

From a hemodynamic perspective, heart failure is a disorder in which the heart cannot pump blood to the body at a rate commensurate with its needs or can do so only at the cost of high-filling pressures.²

The heart's function is measured based on a percentage known as the ejection fraction (EF). The EF plays a primary role in the diagnosis of CHF. A normal EF is classified as above 50 percent. Imaging studies such as an echocardiogram, a cardiac magnetic resonance imaging scan, or a nuclear cardiac scan can estimate the EF.³

Systolic heart failure	Diastolic heart failure
HFrEF (heart failure with reduced EF) EF ≤ 40%	HFpEF (heart failure with preserved EF) EF ≥ 50%
Flaccid heart	Stiff heart

Types of cardiomyopathy:

- Dilated
- Hypertrophic (segmental hypertrophy)
- Restrictive (amyloid)
- Takotsubo

Severity of CHF

The severity of CHF is classified through clinical symptoms along with the New York Heart Association classification system.

- Class I – No physical limitations
- Class II – Slight limitations, comfortable at rest
- Class III – Marked limitations, comfortable at rest
- Class IV – Severe limitations at rest

The therapeutic options for CHF include medication and device interventions.

Documentation tips

ICD-10-CM⁴ coding guidelines indicate a combination code should be used when hypertension and CHF are addressed on the same date of service.

The combination codes include:

- Hypertension (I11.0, I13.0, or 13.2).
- Congestive heart failure (I50.-)
- Myocarditis (I51.4).
- Myocardial degeneration (I51.5).
- Cardiomegaly (I51.7).
- Other ill-defined heart diseases (I51.89).⁵
- Heart disease (I51.9).

Coding tips

- Use codes I50.2- and I50.3, respectively, when documentation links heart failure to systolic or diastolic dysfunction.⁶
- Use I51.89 (other ill-defined heart diseases) for diastolic or systolic dysfunction in the absence of provider linkage.⁷
- When documented, interpret HFrEF and HFpEF to mean systolic heart failure or diastolic heart failure, respectively.⁸

Congestive heart failure (CHF)

ICD-10 code	Description	Additional characters to use
I50.1	Left ventricular failure, unspecified	
I50.2-	Systolic (congestive) heart failure	(-) Add 5th character 0 – Unspecified systolic (congestive) heart failure 1 – Acute systolic (congestive) heart failure 2 – Chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure 3 – Acute on chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure
I50.3-	Diastolic (congestive) heart failure	(-) Add 5th character 0 – Unspecified diastolic (congestive) heart failure 1 – Acute diastolic (congestive) heart failure 2 – Chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure 3 – Acute on chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure
I50.4-	Combined systolic (congestive) and diastolic (congestive) heart failure	(-) Add 5th character 0 – Unspecified combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) heart failure 1 – Acute combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) heart failure 2 – Chronic combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) heart failure 3 – Acute on chronic combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) heart failure
I50.81-	Right heart failure	(-) Add 6th character 0 – Right heart failure, unspecified 1 – Acute right heart failure 2 – Chronic right heart failure 2 – Acute on chronic heart failure 3 – Right heart failure due to left heart failure
I50.82	Biventricular heart failure	
I50.83	High output heart failure	
I50.84	End stage heart failure	
I50.89	Other heart failure ⁵	
I50.9	Heart failure, unspecified	

Hypertensive CHF combinations

ICD-10 code	Description	Documentation tips
I11.0	Hypertensive heart disease with heart failure	Use additional code to identify the type of heart failure (I50.-).
I13.0	Hypertensive heart and chronic kidney disease (CKD) with heart failure and stages 1–4 CKD or unspecified CKD	Use additional code to identify the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of heart failure (I50.-). Stage of CKD (N18.1–N18.4, N18.9).
I13.2	Hypertensive heart and CKD with heart failure with stage 5 CKD or ESRD	Use additional code to identify the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of heart failure (I50.-). Stage of CKD (N18.5, N18.6)

- 1 Diagnosis inaccuracies that are not addressed can result in administrative sanctions and potential financial penalties.
- 2 Wilson S. Colucci, MD, et al. "Heart failure: Clinical manifestations and diagnosis in adults." UpToDate. 20 April 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.UpToDate.com/contents/heart-failure-clinical-manifestations-and-diagnosis-in-adults>.
- 3 Wilson S. Colucci, MD. "Determining the etiology and severity of heart failure or cardiomyopathy." UpToDate. 17 February 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.UpToDate.com/contents/determining-the-etiology-and-severity-of-heart-failure-or-cardiomyopathy>.
- 4 International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification.
- 5 Conditions that fall within the "other" category codes must be directly identified in the documentation and linked by the provider to support a combination code. See ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2023 -- UPDATED April 1, 2023." Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Retrieved from <https://www.CMS.gov/files/document/fy-2023-icd-10-cm-coding-guidelines-updated-01/11/2023.pdf>.
- 6 American Hospital Association (AHA) Coding Clinic, 1st quarter 2017.
- 7 AHA Coding Clinic, 1st quarter 2009.
- 8 AHA Coding Clinic, 1st quarter 2016.