

COVID-19 Update

New ICD Code for Post-COVID-19 Conditions

On Oct. 1, 2021, a new International Classification of Diseases (ICD) code became available: **U09.9 (Post COVID-19 condition, unspecified)**. Use of the code will help track the impact of post-COVID-19 conditions that may not be currently linked.

Background

Research shows that about 14% of adults recovering from COVID-19 develop at least one new clinical sequela (or long-term effect from a disease, injury or infection).^{*} Older members who were hospitalized and those with pre-existing conditions were the most significantly impacted patients. Tracking and analyzing this data will help us better understand long-term effects of COVID-19 and conditions after the disease.

How You Can Help

You can help by using U09.9 (Post COVID-19 condition, unspecified). Because collecting accurate data and gauging the severity of conditions associated with a previous COVID-19 infection can be challenging, the data collected must rely on self-reporting in many instances.

U09.9 helps establish a coding link between coronavirus and lingering symptoms after the virus is no longer active. Use this code instead of B94.8 (sequelae of other specified infectious and parasitic disease). The code B94.8 was available for use until September 30, 2021.

Coding Guidelines

It is important to understand the guidelines for the new code, and where to draw the definitive line between diagnosing Post COVID-19 sequelae and active COVID-19.

- The **new code should not be used** in cases that are still presenting as active COVID-19.
- After adding the code listing the reason for the member's visit, assign a code related to the specific condition associated with COVID-19, then use the U09.9 code.
 - List U09.9 secondary to specific codes for lingering conditions such as chronic respiratory failure (J96.1-), loss of smell (R43.8), loss of taste (R43.8), multisystem inflammatory syndrome (M35.81), pulmonary embolism (I26.-), and pulmonary fibrosis (J84.10) just to name a few, according to new tabular instructions for the code.^{**}

The ICD-10-CM guidelines are clear about sequelae, defining them as "the residual effect (condition produced) after the acute phase of an illness or injury has terminated." There is **no time limit on when a sequela code can be used**, and the residual effect may be present early-on or may arise months or years after the acute phase of a COVID-19 infection.

Please do not use the new code for active COVID-19 cases, except when there is a re-infection (perhaps by different variant). If a patient develops a new active COVID-19 infection that occurs with a condition related to a prior COVID-19, code U09.9 may be assigned in conjunction with code U07.1, COVID-19, to identify that the patient also has a condition associated with a previous COVID-19 infection.

If there is a history of COVID-19 without a current related condition, current or recurrent infection with COVID-19, or clarity in the medical record, **it would not be appropriate to use the new code.**

Resources

Coding resources are available at:

- [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- [ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting](#)
- [AHIMA FAQs Regarding ICD-10-CM/PCS Coding for COVID-19](#)

* <https://www.jwatch.org/na53670/2021/06/11/detailing-sequelae-after-recovery-covid-19>

**ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting 2022. Guideline I.C.1. g.1