

# Coding Guidelines for COVID-19



# What is Coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV)<sup>1</sup>
- Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and has not been previously identified in humans. It caused an outbreak of respiratory illness, and was first identified in 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Since then, thousands of cases have been confirmed in China, and COVID-19 has spread internationally. <sup>2</sup>
- Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.
- The confirmed COVID-19 infections can cause a range of illness, from little to no symptoms, to those affected being severely ill and even dying. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear from 2 to 14 days after exposure, based on the incubation period for other coronaviruses, such as the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) viruses.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/ICD-10-CM-Official-Coding-Guidance-Interim-Advice-coronavirus-feb-20-2020.pdf>

# New ICD-10 CM for COVID-19

The Coordination and Maintenance Committee Meeting announced that the COVID-19 code **U07.1** was effective April 1, 2020.

- The effective date was changed due to the national health emergency of COVID-19.
- Use additional code to identify pneumonia or other manifestations.

Excludes:

Coronavirus infection, unspecified site (B34.2)

Coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified to other chapters (B97.2-)

Severe acute respiratory syndrome [SARS], unspecified (J12.81)

Reference:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/Announcement-New-ICD-code-for-coronavirus-3-18-2020.pdf>

# General Diagnosis Guidance

## Pneumonia

For a pneumonia case confirmed as due to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Code **J12.89**, Other viral pneumonia, and **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere.

## Acute Bronchitis

For confirmed acute bronchitis as due to COVID-19:

- Code **J20.8**, Acute bronchitis due to other specified organisms, and **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere

For bronchitis not otherwise specified (NOS) due to the COVID-19

- Code **J40**, Bronchitis, not specified as acute or chronic; along with code **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere

# General Diagnosis Guidance cont'd

## Lower Respiratory Infection

- Document COVID-19 associated with a *lower respiratory infection*, not otherwise specified (NOS), or an acute respiratory infection, NOS, as code **J22**, Unspecified acute lower respiratory infection, with code **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere.
- Document COVID-19 associated with a *respiratory infection*, NOS, as code **J98.8**, Other specified respiratory disorders, with code **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere.

**Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)** ARDS may develop in with the COVID-19, according to the Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection.

- Document cases with ARDS due to COVID-19 as code **J80**, Acute respiratory distress syndrome, and **B97.29**, Other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere.

# Pre-Operative Testing

All surgical procedures will require preoperative testing to rule out COVID-19

- For pre-operative testing, use diagnosis code **Z01.818**, Encounter for preprocedural examination

# Exposure to COVID-19

- For cases where there is a concern about a possible exposure to COVID-19, but this is ruled out after evaluation, it would be appropriate to assign the code **Z03.818**, Encounter for observation for suspected exposure to other biological agents ruled out.
- For cases where there is an actual exposure to someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19, it would be appropriate to assign the code **Z20.828**, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases.

# Signs and Symptoms

Patients presenting with any signs/symptoms (such as fever, etc.) and where a definitive diagnosis has not been established, should be assigned the appropriate code(s) for each of the presenting signs and symptoms such as:

- **R05** Cough
- **R06.02** Shortness of breath
- **R50.9** Fever, unspecified

# Coding Guidance

## Warning:

- Diagnosis code **B34.2**, Coronavirus infection, unspecified, would in general not be appropriate for the COVID-19, because the cases have universally been respiratory in nature, so the site would not be “unspecified.”
- If the provider documents “**suspected**”, “**possible**” or “**probable**” COVID-19, **do not** assign code B97.29. Assign a code(s) explaining the reason for encounter (such as fever, or Z20.828).

## Reference:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/ICD-10-CM-Official-Coding-Guidance-Interim-Advice-coronavirus-feb-20-2020.pdf>