Coding Conditions of the Digestive System and Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue

Digestive System

Diseases of the digestive system are described in Chapter 11 of the Tabular List of ICD-10-CM. The categories in this chapter are sequenced in a manner that follows the digestive path from the mouth to the anus. Codes range from K00 to K95. The following are the key guidelines to keep in mind when coding conditions of this system:

- Read the Excludes/Includes notes and any other instructions in this chapter to identify if additional codes, characters, or combination codes need to be assigned to a diagnosis.
- Note the presence of hemorrhage (bleeding) and/or perforation associated with the disease.
  - Ensure that the code for gastrointestinal hemorrhage, unspecified (K92.2) is used only if the record does not document a specific site of hemorrhage.
  - Clarify with the physician before assigning the code for hemorrhage as they might not always indicate its presence.
  - There are also combination codes to report conditions with hemorrhage.

Notes

There does not need to be active bleeding for a hemorrhage to be reported. However, the medical record must support the fact that active bleeding has occurred. The physician must identify the source of bleeding for a combination code to be assigned.
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue

Diseases and conditions of the Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue are described in Chapter 12. Codes range from L00 to L99. There is an instruction to “Use additional code” preceding L00. This directs the coder to identify the infectious agent (B95 – B97) in addition to the categories L00 to L08, making multiple coding necessary.

Example

**Diagnosis:** Cellulitis, right finger, due to Staphylococcus aureus

Alphabetic Index:

Cellulitis, finger (intrathecal) (periosteal) (subcutaneous) (subcuticular) L03.01-

Tabular List:

L03 Cellulitis and acute lymphangitis

L03.011 Cellulitis of right finger

To locate the code for the causative organism, reference the main term “Infection” in the Alphabetic Index. The code for the organism is assigned as an additional code and sequenced after the disease or condition.

Codes: L03.011, B95.61

Notes

- Conditions affecting the nails, sweat glands, hair, and hair follicles are included in this chapter.
- Congenital conditions of skin, hair, and nails are classified in the category Q80 – Q89.
- Neoplasms of skin are covered in Chapter 2.
Ulcers

Patients restricted to bed or unable to change position often develop pressure ulcers, also called decubitus ulcers, due to decreased circulation. Pressure ulcers are graded and reported based on the depth of the ulcer and are categorized in stages:

- Stage 1: Erythema (redness) of skin
- Stage 2: Partial loss of skin (epidermis or dermis)
- Stage 3: Full thickness loss of skin (up to fascia)
- Stage 4: Full thickness loss (extensive destruction and necrosis)
Non-pressure ulcers typically result from vascular insufficiencies. There is a note at the beginning of category L97 that directs the coder to report the underlying conditions first. Non-pressure ulcer codes are assigned by the site and depth of the ulcer.