

# Documentation and Coding: Morbid Obesity

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At Healthfirst, we're committed to helping providers accurately document and code their patients' health records.

This tip sheet is intended to assist providers and coding staff with the documentation and ICD-10-CM selection on services submitted to Healthfirst. It provides information from industry sources about proper coding practice. However, this document does not represent or guarantee that Healthfirst will cover and/or pay for services outlined. Coverage decisions are based on the terms of the applicable evidence of coverage and the provider's participation agreement. This includes the determination of any amounts that Healthfirst or the member owes the provider.

**To accurately code a patient as morbidly obese, the provider must document the patient's obesity in the medical record.** Per 2020 ICD-10-CM Guidelines, "BMI codes should only be assigned when there is an associated, reportable diagnosis (such as morbid obesity). Do not assign BMI codes during pregnancy."

E66.01 Morbid (severe) obesity due to excess calories

E66.2 Morbid (severe) obesity with alveolar hypoventilation or obesity hypoventilation syndrome (OHS) (Pickwickian syndrome)

ICD-10-CM	Description	Documentation should include the following:
Z68.41	Body mass index [BMI] 40.0–44.9 adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The patient's height, weight, and BMI (a BMI <math>\geq</math> 40 is considered extreme obesity)</li> <li>■ Specifically documented BMI in the medical record</li> <li>■ Presence or absence of any current symptoms related to morbid obesity, severe obesity, or extreme obesity</li> <li>■ Any associated diagnoses that caused the condition, with terms that show the cause-and-effect relationship (e.g., "due to," "secondary to," "related to," etc.)</li> <li>■ Any referrals to a nutritionist</li> <li>■ Educational material related to the obesity condition, with information about balanced diet, plan for follow-up visit, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE:</b> "Associated diagnoses such as morbid obesity must be documented by the patient's provider." (2020 ICD-10-CM Guidelines)</p>
Z68.42	Body mass index [BMI] 45.0–49.9 adult	
Z68.43	Body mass index [BMI] 50.0–59.9 adult	
Z68.44	Body mass index [BMI] 60.0–69.9 adult	
Z68.45	Body mass index [BMI] 70 or greater, adult	

Underweight  
BMI < 18.5

Normal  
BMI = 18.5–24.9

Overweight  
BMI = 25.0–29.9

Obese  
BMI = 30.0–39.9

Extremely Obese  
BMI  $\geq$  40

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# Morbid Obesity

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### DO NOT:

- describe a current obesity diagnosis as “history of;”
- document a suspected or unconfirmed diagnosis as if it were confirmed; or
- use terms that imply uncertainty (e.g., “probable,” “apparently,” “likely,” “consistent with,” etc.) to describe a current, confirmed peripheral vascular disease condition.

### Questions?

Contact us at [#Risk\\_Adjustments\\_and\\_clinical\\_Documentation@healthfirst.org](https://twitter.com/Risk_Adjustments_and_clinical_Documentation@healthfirst.org).

For additional documentation and coding guidance, please visit the Coding section at [hfproviders.org](https://www.healthfirst.org/hfproviders.org).

**References:** [EncoderPro.com](https://www.encoderpro.com); [CodingClinic.com](https://www.codingclinic.com); [SuperCoder.com](https://www.supercoder.com); [AAPC 2020 CRC Study Guide](https://www.aapc.com).