

Pyogenic Arthritis

At Healthfirst, we are 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 - specifically for **Pyogenic Arthritis**. It provides information from industry sources about proper coding practice. This document does not represent or guarantee that Healthfirst will cover and/or pay for the 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 amount that Healthfirst or the member owes the provider.

Bacterial infection is the most common cause of Pyogenic Arthritis. It may also be referred to as **Suppurative, Septic Arthritis** or **Suppurative Synovitis** in the documentation.

ICD-10-CM Codes and Descriptions

	Staphylococcal	Pneumococcal	Other Streptococcal	Other Bacteria
Joint [†]	M00.00	M00.10	M00.20	M00.80
Vertebrae	M00.08	M00.18	M00.28	M00.88
Polyarthrititis	M00.09	M00.19	M00.29	M00.89

[†]Use only in the event when no other code describes the condition.

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Documentation and Coding

Pyogenic Arthritis Diagnosis Codes Requiring Laterality Notation

The following codes require providers to identify laterality by adding a sixth digit where "X" is located. (1= right; 2 = left; 9 = Unspecified)

	Staphylococcal	Pneumococcal	Other Streptococcal	Other Bacteria
Shoulder	M00.01X	M00.11X	M00.21X	M00.81X
Elbow	M00.02X	M00.12X	M00.22X	M00.82X
Wrist	M00.03X	M00.13X	M00.23X	M00.83X
Hand	M00.04X	M00.14X	M00.24X	M00.84X
Hip	M00.05X	M00.15X	M00.25X	M00.85X
Knee	M00.06X	M00.16X	M00.26X	M00.86X
Ankle & Foot	M00.07X	M00.17X	M00.27X	M00.87X

Coding Tips

- To identify bacterial agent, use additional code from Category **B95.61-B95.8***
- To identify other streptococcal bacterial agents, use additional code from Category (**B95.0-B95.2, B95.4-B95.5**)
- If applicable add an additional code from Category **T84.5*** - infection and inflammatory reaction due to internal joint prosthesis.

*Required additional digits to complete the code.

Documentation and Coding

Documentation Recommendations

Status of Condition	Currently on medication “x;” Stable	Worsening	Improved		
Laterality	Right	Left			
Specify Location	Joint	Shoulder	Elbow	Wrist	Hip
	Hand	Knee	Ankle & Foot	Vertebrae	Polyarthritis
Type of Bacterial Organism	Staphylococcal	Pneumococcal	Other streptococcal	Due to other bacteria, i.e. sepsis	
Infectious Arthropathy Type	Direct to the joint	Indirect to the joint	Post infective arthropathy		
Identify Chronic Conditions	i.e. Chronic Arthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Diabetes, Joint Trauma,				
Use Linking Terms	“Due to,” “Secondary to” or “Associated with” i.e. Septic Arthritis due to prosthetic joint.				
Exam findings	Warm, fever, weakness Restricted range of motion functional joint impairment Swollen rt knee				
Treatment Plan	Joint Surgery: Drain, cleanse joint fluid Medication: pain & antibiotics - link to conditions Diagnostic testing with findings: X-ray, MRI, Ultrasound, Lab results, aspiration of fluid for bacterial culture Physical/Occupational therapy				

Identifying the type of bacteria as **unspecified pyogenic arthritis** lacks specificity and does not identify the site or laterality of the arthritis.

Documentation and Coding

Coding Examples

Case 1	A patient, who is status post left total knee arthroplasty surgery, and recent wisdom tooth extraction, is diagnosed with hematogenous left knee prosthetic joint infection. He underwent revision of the arthroplasty with exchange of modular components and synovectomy. Does the term “hematogenous” mean the prosthetic joint infection is due to the presence of the prosthesis, or instead is seeded from concurrent infection elsewhere in the body? Is it appropriate to assign code T84.54XA, Infection and inflammatory reaction due to internal left knee prosthesis, initial encounter, for the hematogenous left prosthetic knee joint infection due to the dental infection?
AHA Coding Clinic 2019 3rd Quarter p16 Volume 6 Number 3	No. In this case, the infection of the knee is not due to the prosthetic joint but occurs secondary to another source. Hematogenous infection by definition means the infection originated in the blood and spread by way of the bloodstream. Assign code M00.862, Arthritis due to other bacteria, left knee, for the hematogenous infection caused by the dental infection. Assign also code Z96.652, Presence of left artificial knee joint. Additional codes should be assigned for any other associated infections as well as a code for the specific bacterial organism. In this case, a complication code is not appropriate, as the infection is not due to the prosthesis.

Documentation and Coding

References

- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4062140/>
- [Bone and joint infections Notes: Diagrams & Illustrations | Osmosis](#)
- <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/fy-2025-icd-10-cm-coding-guidelines.pdf>

Questions?

Contact us at #Risk_Adjustments_and_clinical_Documentation@healthfirst.org.

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

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