



THE ROAD TO ICD-10

COMPLICATION CODES

ICD-10 makes a distinction between complications that occur during a procedure and those that occur post-procedure. There is no time limitation as to when complications can occur; however, providers must document the relationship between the complication and the procedure performed. Documentation of these unforeseen occurrences supports extended care.

Practitioners may have varied opinions of what qualifies as a complication after a procedure, but consider the following as potential examples of postoperative complications:

- Wound infections
- Coronary artery bypass graft thrombosis
- Pulmonary emboli within one week of surgery

Remember: there is a difference between an expected condition following a procedure and a complication. Only practitioners can determine whether conditions are expected outcomes or complications.

Examples of expected outcomes following procedures may include:

- Low grade temperature of 99.8 for one to two days following surgery
- Postoperative ileus immediately following certain abdominal surgeries
- Hyperglycemia following total pancreatectomy

The key to documenting conditions that arise during or following procedures is to state when the condition occurred, if it is an expected outcome, or a complication of the procedure. This type of documentation assists with appropriate code assignment.