

COPD VS EMPHYSEMA



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COPD

- COPD can include emphysema, chronic bronchitis or both
- Emphysema is a disease that damages the air sacs and may damage the small airways in the lungs
- Chronic Bronchitis involves increases cough and mucous production caused by inflammation of the airways.

DETERMINING WHEN TO CODE COPD OR EMPHYSEMA

It can be confusing to know when to code COPD or emphysema. Below find some scenarios that may be helpful in choosing the correct diagnosis.

	Chronic Bronchitis	Emphysema
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mucus producing cough • Shortness of breath • Chest tightness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath
Treatments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronchodilators • Steroids • Oxygen • Antibiotics, if lung infection is present • Pulmonary rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronchodilators • Steroids • Oxygen • Antibiotics, if lung infection is present • Pulmonary rehabilitation • Lung volume reduction surgery • Lung transplant
*Treatment is directed at symptoms and slowing disease progression, there is no cure		

Coding Scenario #1

The physician documents COPD with chronic bronchitis and emphysema in the record. Per *Coding Clinic*, Fourth Quarter ICD-10 2017 pg. 97, assign code J44.9, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, unspecified. Code J43.9, Emphysema, unspecified, has an excludes1 note excluding “emphysema with chronic (obstructive) bronchitis.” Category J44, Other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, includes chronic bronchitis with emphysema.

Coding Scenario #2

The physician documents COPD with emphysema and there is no mention of chronic bronchitis in the record. Per *Coding Clinic*, Fourth Quarter ICD-10 2017 pg. 97, Assign code J43.9, Emphysema, unspecified. Remember that Category J44, Other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, includes *chronic bronchitis* with emphysema. In this scenario, there was no mention of chronic bronchitis.

Coding Scenario #3

The physician documents exacerbation of COPD with emphysema, with no mention of chronic bronchitis. Per *Coding Clinic*, Fourth Quarter ICD-10 2017 pg. 97, Assign code J43.9, Emphysema, unspecified. Emphysema without mention of chronic bronchitis is classified to category J43, Emphysema. COPD is not synonymous with chronic bronchitis. So, “COPD exacerbation with emphysema” is assigned code J43.9 because “COPD” does not automatically mean the patient has chronic bronchitis. Emphysema is a type of COPD. Please note that if exacerbation of COPD is documented in the record of a patient with both emphysema and chronic bronchitis, then the correct code is J44.1, COPD with acute exacerbation.

Key Tip:

The physician must document “**chronic bronchitis**” for the COPD (J44) code to be assigned even when in exacerbation