

Internal Medicine Coding Alert

Reader Questions: Discover Hard-to-Find ICD-9 Codes

Question: What diagnosis code should I use for a cerebrospinal fluid leak?

Texas Subscriber

Answer: The correct ICD-9 code for a cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leak depends on where it occurs. If the CSF leak comes from the nose, report 349.81 (Cerebrospinal fluid rhinorrhea). If the CSF leaks from the ear, report 388.61 (Cerebrospinal fluid otorrhea). Note: Only the definitions below the code descriptors cite "leakage."