

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Beware: Avoid These Diabetes Coding Pitfalls

When coding for diabetes, if you're listing the manifestation first, you're making a mistake. Here are four common errors you want to watch out for:

- **Don't assume a cause and effect relationship.** Make certain that the patient record indicates the relationship. If this isn't clear, query the physician before using a manifestation code.
- **Never list the manifestation first.** Report the related diabetes code before reporting the manifestation code.
- **Never code 250.x with manifestations.** Coding 250.x (Diabetes mellitus without mention of complication) indicates that there are no diabetic manifestations. If you code a patient with 250.0x and then see a listing of diabetic manifestations, go back and start over again with the corresponding diabetes code.
- **Don't use 250.8x as a catch-all.** When you have multiple manifestations that correspond to a variety of complications, don't lump them all under 250.8x (Diabetes with other specified manifestations). Instead, list each diabetes code preceding the corresponding manifestations.