

Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

Coding Guidelines: Master Adverse Effects Coding with the Table of Drugs and Chemicals

To code correctly for the adverse effects of a drug prescribed and taken correctly, you must know your way around the Table of Drugs and Chemicals in your ICD-9 coding manual.

The table, located in Section 2 of the alphabetic index, provides a classification of drugs and other chemical substances to identify poisoning states and external causes of adverse effects.

The first column for each drug or other chemical substance provides codes to indicate that your patient was poisoned. The five remaining columns describe the circumstances surrounding the poisoning or the adverse effects. These include:

- Accident (E850-E869) -- An accidental overdose of a drug, the wrong substance given or taken, a drug taken inadvertently, or accidents in the use of drugs and biologicals in medical and surgical procedures. These codes are also used to show the external causes of poisonings classifiable to categories 980-989 (Toxic effect of substances chiefly nonmedicinal as to source).
- Therapeutic use (E930-E949) -- A correct substance or substances properly administered in therapeutic or prophylactic dosage as the external cause of adverse effects. With therapeutic use, everything was done right, but despite everybody's best efforts, something bad happened.
- Suicide attempt (E950-E952) -- Self-inflicted injuries or poisonings.
- Assault (E961-E962) -- Injury or poisoning inflicted by another person with the intent to injure or kill.
- Undetermined (E980-E982) -- Used when the intent of the poisoning or injury cannot be determined whether accidental or intentional.

Tip: When coding a poisoning, the default E code is for Accident (E850-E869) if the physician has not provided further information.