

## Home Health ICD-9/ICD-10 Alert

### READER QUESTIONS: Read Between The Parentheses

**Question:** If I look up a condition in the ICD-9-CM manual's index and the condition is followed by words in parentheses, do any or all of these words need to be in the patient's record for me to report the code?

Minnesota Subscriber

**Answer:** ICD-9-CM includes supplementary words in parentheses to ease and expand your coding, not make it more difficult and limiting.

According to ICD-9 guidelines, "the terms within the parentheses are referred to as nonessential modifiers" and they "may be present or absent in the statement of a disease or procedure without affecting the code number to which it is assigned."

Let's say a patient has acute mesenteric infarction. You look up the condition in the Alphabetic Index and find the following:

**"Infarct, infarction"**

Mesentery, mesenteric (embolic) (thrombotic) (with gangrene) 557.0

You should report 557.0 regardless of whether the terms "embolic" "thrombotic" or "with gangrene" appear in the report.