

MDS Alert

What Do You Think? Which ICD-9-CM Code Should You Use For Dehydration?

The ICD-9 manual used to have only one catch-all code for volume depletion, which was 276.5. Now, there are three codes:

- 276.50 (Volume depletion, unspecified)
- 276.51 (Dehydration)
- 276.52 (Hypovolemia)

The difference between the codes, says **June Bronnert, RHIA, CCS, CCS-P**, with the **American Health Information Association**, is the bodily substance depleted. The code 276.51 indicates "a depletion of total body water, while 276.52 (hypovolemia) is a depletion of [the] volume [of] plasma," she says. "Volume depletion is a combination of both conditions (body water and plasma)." Select the proper code based on the provider's documentation. If the provider documented "dehydration," code 276.51, Bronnert advises MDS Alert.