

OASIS Alert

Reader Question: Clear Up Any Scab Confusion With This Advice

Scabs don't always indicate non-healing surgical wounds

Question: Can we use non-healing surgical wound ICD-9-CM code 998.83 as a diagnosis code when there is a scab present on the surgical incision?

Answer: Surgical incisions healing by primary intention with any portion of scab are not coded as 998.83 (non-healing surgical wound) on the OASIS diagnosis questions, explains coding and OASIS expert **Lisa Selman-Holman**, consultant and principal of **Selman-Holman & Associates** in Denton, Texas. If you are marking the wound as non-healing ONLY because of scab presence (i.e. there is not dehiscence and no signs and symptoms of infection) then code for aftercare along with the code for scab: 782.8, she says.