

How to Choose the Right Code From the Canadian Emergency Department Diagnosis Shortlist

Purpose

To help facilities determine the most appropriate diagnosis code from those available in the Canadian Emergency Department Diagnosis Shortlist (CED-DxS)

Background

The CED-DxS is an excerpt from the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Canada* (ICD-10-CA); it includes terms and corresponding codes for conditions that are frequently seen in an emergency department (ED). Not all ICD-10-CA codes are available on the list. When an ED discharge diagnosis is not on the CED-DxS, use the steps below to help determine the most appropriate code to select. Please note that there may be some instances when an appropriate code cannot be located (see step 3).

Abbreviations are used for common terms included in the CED-DxS (e.g., COPD for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, DM for diabetes mellitus). A complete list of abbreviations and corresponding descriptions can be found in the CED-DxS pick-list documents.

CED-DxS code selection process

Step 1: Is the diagnosis an injury or the result of an accident (e.g., a fall, a car accident)?

- a) **If the diagnosis is an injury**, review the codes beginning with the letter S or T. Codes beginning with the letter S are grouped by the type of injury for a number of body regions.
- If the diagnosis is a type of injury listed in the table below but the exact body site of the injury is not on the list, select the code for the type of injury for the most similar body site available (e.g., for closed fracture of the tibia, select S82900 Fx lower leg, closed). The type of injury is more important than the exact site of the injury.

Type of injury	Abbreviation on list	Includes . . .
Fracture	Fx	Open and closed fractures — most bones are on the list
Dislocation	Disloc	Joint dislocations — common locations are on the list
Open wound	OW	Animal bites, lacerations, punctures or any type of injury where the skin has been broken
Complicated open wound	OW OW + FB / Infection	Wounds with a foreign body that pierces the skin or wounds with an infection
Foreign body via natural orifice	FB	Foreign bodies that enter the body through the eye, ear, mouth and other orifices
Sprain or strain	—	Common sprains or strains are on the list
Superficial injury	Sup inj	Contusions, bruises, insect bites and stings
Poisoning or exposure to other substances	—	Prescription and non-prescription drugs, chemicals, gases and vapours
Other injuries	—	Amputations and nerve injuries, for certain body sites

- b) **If the diagnosis is an accident** (e.g., a fall, a car accident) but the type of injury is not on the list, select R69.
- c) **If the diagnosis is neither an injury nor the result of an accident**, go to step 2.

Step 2: If the diagnosis is not an injury or the result of an accident, determine the nature of the condition or body system involved.

- Many of the conditions on the list are grouped by body system. Whenever possible, select a code related to the appropriate body system.
- If the specific condition is not on the list, check whether the general codes at the end of certain body system groups apply (e.g., J989 Respiratory disorder, I99 CVS [cardiovascular system] disorder).
- There is a group of codes for diagnoses related to circumstances other than disease or injury (e.g., requesting a prescription refill). For these cases, review the codes beginning with the letter Z under “Contact with health services.”
- Refer to the table below to locate codes related to specific conditions.

If the diagnosis is . . .	Review the group of codes beginning with the letter . . .
Cancer or a tumour	C or D under “Neoplasms”
Related to the skin or nails	L under “Dermatologic diseases”
Back, muscle, arm or leg pain	M under “Diseases of the MSK (musculoskeletal) system and connective tissue”
Related to a pregnancy	O under “Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium”
Related to a newborn	P under “Conditions originating in the perinatal period”
A sign or symptom	R under “Symptoms, signs and abnormal findings”
Related to suspected SARS, a vaping-related disorder or COVID-19	U under “Provisional codes”
Related to other reasons for coming to the ED	Z under “Contact with health services”

- If the diagnosis is not found using the steps above, go to step 3.

Step 3: If the diagnosis still cannot be found . . .

- Because the diagnosis is not specific enough to determine even the body system, select R69.
- Because the diagnosis is too specific and it doesn’t fit into any group on the list, select R69.

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