Morbid Obesity

Morbid obesity is a chronic disease in which a person has a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or ≥35 and experiencing obesity-related health conditions.

A BMI is a screening tool that measures the ration of height to weight. Healthcare providers use a BMI, along with other tools, to determine a patient's health status and risks. Below are the BMI ranges that classify weight.

Weight Category	BMI
Underweight	≤18.5
Healthy Weight	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight	25 – 29.9
Obese (Class I)	30 – 34.9
Severely Obese (Class II)	35 – 39.9
Morbidly Obese (Class III)	≥40

Often, a BMI may be abnormal in a healthy patient due to bone or muscle mass. It is the provider's responsibility to interpret the BMI and provide a clinical diagnosis for each patient.

According to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, patients who have a BMI ≥ 35 with the following listed comorbid conditions may be clinically diagnosed with morbid obesity and qualify for bariatric surgery.

- Type II Diabetes Mellitus
- Hypertension
- Sleep Apnea
- Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver
- Osteoarthritis
- Hyperlipidemia
- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Heart Disease

The American Hospital Association indicates that individuals who are overweight, obese, or morbidly obese are at an increased risk for certain medical conditions. These conditions are always clinically significant and reportable when documented by the provider.

RESOURCES:
https://asmbs.org/; AHA coding clinic Q4, 2018, pg. 77

Documentation & Coding

The diagnosis of morbid obesity must be made by the provider based on the patient's condition, clinical criteria, and professional judgment. Morbid obesity cannot be assumed based on BMI alone. The diagnosis is dependent on the provider's documentation.

Document all comorbid conditions and complications that are impacting medical decision-making along with a detailed assessment, prognosis, and treatment plan for each encounter.

For patients who have had bariatric surgery and/or weight loss, ensure the diagnosis is not being "carried over" and would not be better classified as having a history of morbid obesity rather than morbid obesity as a current condition.

Documentation of a BMI alone cannot be coded unless the associated weight condition is also documented, such as overweight, obesity, or morbidly obese. BMI codes are only used as secondary codes.

Description	ICD-10
Morbid (severe) Obesity	E66.01
Drug-induced Obesity	E66.1
Obesity Hypoventilation Syndrome	E66.2
Overweight	E66.3
Obesity	E66.9
$BMI \leq 19.9$	Z68.1
BMI 20	Z68.2-
BMI 30	Z68.3-
BMI 40 – 44.9	Z68.41
BMI 45 – 49.9	Z68.42
BMI 50 – 59.9	Z68.43
BMI 60 – 69.9	Z68.44
BMI ≥ 70	Z68.45

*A dash (-) indicates an incomplete code**