



# Chronic Condition Coding: Depression

## Depression

Depression (major depressive disorder or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks<sup>1</sup>. Doctors aren't sure what causes depression, but a prominent theory is altered brain structure and chemical function. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a negative personality. It is a major public health problem and a treatable medical condition<sup>2</sup>.

## Symptoms of Depression

Some of the signs and symptoms of depression can be experienced most of the day, or nearly every day, for at least two weeks. These include feelings of sadness, anxiousness, hopelessness, irritability, guilt, decreased energy or fatigue, loss of interest, decreased energy or fatigue, feeling restless, difficulty concentrating or sleeping, appetite changes and/or thoughts of death or suicide<sup>1</sup>.

## Treatment of Depression

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is. Depression is usually treated with medications, psychotherapy or a combination of the two<sup>1</sup>. In addition to therapy and medication, research suggests pets and exercise are potent weapons against mild to moderate depression<sup>2</sup>.

## Depression Coding Guidance

TIPS:	ICD-10 Mapping & Education
Refer to ICD-10-CM	F32.0 – F33.9 (Major depressive disorder) <sup>3</sup>
Be precise	Avoid broad terms and unspecified codes such as “Depression”, F32.9. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be meticulous in picking up the details in documentation.</li> <li>• It leads to precise coding and a better awareness about the disease and the population it affects.</li> </ul>
Use specifying terms in the documentation, such as...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severity (mild, moderate, severe)</li> <li>• Episodes (single, recurrent, or in remission)</li> </ul>
Use a depression screening tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health America offers a convenient questionnaire that makes it easy to obtain specific diagnosis codes<sup>4</sup>.</li> <li>• Note all disclaimers on the website.</li> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screen/patient-health">http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screen/patient-health</a>.</li> </ul>
Refill medication correctly	Don't forget to verify the condition and list the diagnosis in the Assessment and Plan.