

Malnutrition is when the body does not get enough nutrients or the right balance of nutrients for optimal health. The cause of this is a poor diet and digestive symptoms and or another disease. If malnutrition is left untreated it can lead to physical and mental disabilities. Malnutrition can develop to anorexia, iatrogenic starvation.

Different Types of Malnutrition

- Unspecified severe protein- calorie (E43)
- Moderate protein-calorie (E44.0)
- Mild protein-calorie (E46)
- Marasmus (E41) - This is a severe undernourishment causing an infant's or child's weight to be very low for their age.
- Marasmic kwashiorkor (E42)- an inability to grow or gain weight usually have symptoms like a bulging stomach, and edema.

Sign and Symptoms

- Lack of appetite
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Inability to concentrate.
- Feeling cold
- Depression
- Loss of fat, muscle mass and body tissue
- High risk of illness
- High risk of complications after surgery

Risk Factors

- Older adults
- Adults in hospital or long-term institutional care
- Individuals who are socially isolated
- Low-income population
- People living with a serious illness or condition.

- Difficulty absorbing nutrients.
- People with chronic eating disorders like bulimia

Diagnostics Testing

- History of conditions related to malnutrition, or history of this diagnosis.
- Laboratory tests - blood tests, prealbumin, albumin, nutrients, iron
- Physical examination- signs of weight loss, fluid accumulation.
- Anthropometric data- height, weight, weight loss., skin folds, other body composition metrics
- Dietary data- collecting form the patient about their diet, and other factors that will contribute to malnutrition and analyzed by a computer based nutritional assessment program.

Treatment

- Screening and monitoring
- Dietary plan
- Treating symptoms like nausea
- Treating infections that may have occurred.
- Depending on the severity hospitalization may be required.
- Have patient take nutrients over several days.
- Potassium and calcium may be received intravenously.

Clinical Documentation and Coding Tips

SOAP Notes documentation tips:

- **Subjective** – Document the presence or absence of any current symptoms or conditions related to Malnutrition.

- **Objective** – Document signs, symptoms, conditions, and labs/test results related to malnutrition.
- **Assessment**–Document diagnostic statements that are compatible with ICD-10 codes to the highest specificity.
- **Plan** – Document and link all medications used to treat malnutrition and or condition caused by it. Detail any referrals, consultations, labs, or diagnostic testing requested.

Medicare Hierarchal Condition Categories (HCC)

Hierarchical condition category (HCC) coding is a risk-adjustment model designed to estimate future health care costs for patients. This model filters ICD-10CM codes into diagnosis groups (DxGs), and then into Conditions Categories (CCs). Hierarchies or families are placed to gain an HCC numeric code, which translates to a risk adjustment factor (RAF) value. Each diagnosis code found in the model, as a stand-alone diagnosis code or within a family or hierarchy, carries a value through RAF, but this value can change if the patient has other influencing factors such as ESRD, hospice, or are dual-eligible. Families or hierarchies set a value based on severity of illness, with more severe diagnoses carrying the overall risk score for that family. Diagnoses within families or hierarchies are inclusive of one another, while any additional diagnoses from other hierarchies or stand-alone diagnoses are additive and increase each patient's overall risk score.

Malnutrition is a chronic condition that falls within the category “Malnutrition” (21) with an average RAF Score of 0.693

Coding Malnutrition

ICD 10- Code Description

E41	Nutritional marasmus
E42	Marasmic kwashiorkor
E43	Unspecified severe protein-calorie malnutrition
E44.0	Moderate protein-calorie malnutrition
E44.1	Mild protein-calorie malnutrition
E45	Retarded development following protein-calorie malnutrition

E46	Unspecified malnutrition	protein-calorie
------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Always Remember

- Codes the most specific type of malnutrition
- There are conditions due to malnutrition that would need to be documented.
- This diagnosis should not be based on a laboratory abnormality alone.
- Considered the social living, or the environment.