

# Risk Adjustment Coding Academy- Coding Focus

## Avoid Coding Failures for Chronic Kidney Disease



According to the National Kidney Foundation, the kidney’s main function is to filter waste product and excess fluid from the body through urine. If the kidneys are not functioning properly, waste can build to high levels in the bloodstream. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is defined as the presence of a kidney abnormality, or “marker” (e.g., protein in urine), with reduced kidney function for a period of three months or longer.

CKD is also referred to as chronic renal disease. Approximately 26 million American adults have CKD, while millions of others are at an increase risk of developing CKD.<sup>1</sup>

### CKD Causes

The two main diseases that cause CKD are diabetes and hypertension. Diabetes occurs when a person’s blood sugar is too high; it can cause damage to many organs including the kidneys. Hypertension (i.e., high blood pressure) occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls increases. If not controlled, hypertension can cause many complications including CKD. Furthermore, CKD can also cause hypertension.

### CKD Detection

To prevent the progression of kidney disease, early detection and treatment are key. There are two simple tests that can be performed to detect kidney disease:

1. Albumin-to-Creatinine Ratio (ACR)- estimates the amount of albumin (i.e., protein found in blood that can pass into the urine if kidneys are damaged) in urine
2. Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)- a blood test for waste product called creatinine. Creatinine results in addition to age, race, and sex are used in calculating GFR to measure kidney function.

GFR is the best test available to measure kidney function and to determine the stage of CKD. The table below includes the stage of CKD, kidney damage with the severity of kidney function loss, GFR range, and the corresponding ICD-10-CM code with applicable CMS-HCC code.

Stage	Loss of Kidney Function	GFR	ICD-10 code
1	Normal	≥ 90	N18.1
2	Mild	60-89	N18.2
3a	Mild to Moderate	44-59	N18.3
3b	Moderate to Severe	30-44	N18.3 (HCC 138)
4	Severe	15-29	N18.4 (HCC 137)
5	Kidney Failure	< 15	N18.5 (HCC 136)

### Coding for CKD

There are instructional notes in the ICD-10 code book<sup>2</sup> to code first any related:

- Diabetic CKD (E08.22, E09.22, E10.22, E11.22, E13.22)
- Hypertensive CKD (I12-, I13-)

### New ICD-10 Coding Guidance

Per ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting (FY 2017), “The word “with” should be interpreted to mean “associated with” or “due to” when it appears in a code title, the Alphabetic Index, or an instructional note in the Tabular List. The classification presumes a causal relationship between the two conditions linked by these terms in the Alphabetic Index or Tabular List. These conditions should be coded as related even in the absence of provider documentation explicitly linking them, unless the documentation clearly states the conditions are unrelated. For conditions not specifically linked by these relational terms in the classification, provider documentation must link the conditions in order to code them as related.”<sup>3</sup>

In the ICD-10-CM Alphabet Index, CKD is listed under the subterm “with” for both diabetes and hypertension. Unless the documentation clearly states that CKD is due to a different cause or is unrelated to diabetes and/or hypertension, the relationship is to be assumed.

1. Source: National Kidney Foundation website (March 2016): kidney.org  
 2. Anita Schmidt, K.K. & P.W. (2016). ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians. Optum360  
 3. ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting (Sept. 2016): [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/10cmguidelines\\_2017\\_final.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/10cmguidelines_2017_final.pdf)