

# Human immunodeficiency virus

Documentation and coding: Individual & Family Plans

December 2025

**For coding education questions,** email [CignaHealthcareHCPEducation@CignaHealthcare.com](mailto:CignaHealthcareHCPEducation@CignaHealthcare.com).

It's important to accurately document and code diagnoses when submitting claims for your patients with Cigna Healthcare®-administered coverage. This helps ensure your diagnosis and coding practices comply with all applicable legal requirements,<sup>1</sup> while enabling us to provide our customers with the benefits and resources they need. For additional information and resources, visit the Cigna Healthcare Individual & Family Plans page at [CignaforHCP.com/IFP](https://CignaforHCP.com/IFP).

*The information that follows is designed to provide guidance for the documentation and coding of claims for your patients with a diagnosis of HIV. It is not meant to replace your judgment when caring for your patients.*

## Definitions and criteria

**Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** is a chronic disease that weakens the immune system by destroying cells that help protect against disease and infection. If not treated, it can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).<sup>2</sup>

Contact/exposure:

- Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) reduces the chances of getting HIV from sex or injection drug use.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) emergency medication is recommended to prevent HIV after possible exposure.<sup>2</sup>
- Type 2 HIV (HIV 2) has the same clinical features as HIV except for a difference in nucleotides and amino acids – most marked with envelope genes and proteins.<sup>3</sup>

**AIDS** is the ongoing chronic condition caused by HIV. Most people in the United States don't get AIDS due to early treatment of HIV.<sup>4</sup>

## Documentation and coding

- Capture HIV diagnosis based on the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision (ICD-10-CM) nomenclature, when provider diagnostic statement states symptomatic or asymptomatic with a treatment plan (monitor, medication, referral, education, etc.).
- Assign code Z21 (asymptomatic HIV virus infection status) for documentation of HIV or HIV positive

without documentation of HIV disease, HIV-related illness, or AIDS.<sup>5</sup>

- Include either symptomatic or asymptomatic in the diagnostic statement for best practice documentation.<sup>5</sup>
- Use code B20 for symptomatic HIV disease.<sup>5</sup> Use additional diagnostic statements to describe comorbid conditions or medical complications (e.g., dementia, depression, pregnancy, childbirth, opportunistic infections) of HIV infection/disease.
- Only assign an ICD-10-CM code for confirmed cases of HIV. HIV is the exception to the "uncertain diagnosis" ICD-10-CM guideline. "Suspected," "probable," "likely," and other uncertain verbiage in the inpatient setting do not warrant assigning a code for HIV.
- Do not assign code B20 or Z21 to newborns with HIV antibodies prior to 18 months of age. Assign code R75 for newborns aged 0 days–18 months born of an HIV-positive mother.
- Code long-term use of antiretroviral medications.
- For HIV complicating pregnancy, refer to ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting guidelines, sections I.C.15.G and I.C.15.i.<sup>3</sup>
- Do not use an explicit immunodeficiency code (like D84.81) with HIV disease. Immunodeficiency is considered inherent to the HIV infection itself and is covered by the HIV disease code (B20).

ICD-10 code	Description	Additional character(s)	Documentation and coding tips
<b>B20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV</li> <li>• AIDS</li> <li>• AIDS-related complex</li> <li>• HIV infection, symptomatic</li> <li>• HIV disease managed on antiretroviral medications<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>		
<b>B97.35</b>	Type 2 HIV		
<b>D59.31</b>	Infection-associated hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS)		
<b>F02.80</b>	Dementia in HIV		Code first B20.
<b>F02.81-</b>	Behavioral disturbance in HIV	(-) Add 5th and 6th character(s) 11 – agitation 18 – other behavioral 2 – psychotic disturbance 3 – mood disturbance 4 – anxiety	Code first B20.
<b>O98.7-</b>	HIV complicating pregnancy, childbirth, and puerperium	(-) Add 5th and 6th character(s) 11 – first trimester 12 – second trimester 13 – third trimester 2 – childbirth 3 – puerperium	Code also B20 or Z21.
<b>R75</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconclusive laboratory evidence of HIV</li> <li>• Nonconclusive HIV test finding in infants</li> </ul>		
<b>Z11.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encounter for HIV screening</li> </ul>		
<b>Z20.6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to HIV virus</li> </ul>		
<b>Z21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asymptomatic HIV status</li> <li>• HIV positive</li> <li>• HIV test positive</li> <li>• Without documentation of HIV disease with current symptoms.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>		
<b>Z29.81</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encounter for HIV PrEP</li> </ul>		Code also contact/ exposure with HIV virus (Z20.06).
<b>Z71.7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling for HIV status</li> </ul>		
<b>Z72.5-</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-risk sexual behavior</li> </ul>		
<b>Z79.899</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term use of antiretroviral medications<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>		

1 Diagnosis inaccuracies that are not addressed can result in administrative sanctions and potential financial penalties.

2 "Preventing HIV with PEP." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 25 January 2024. Retrieved from [https://www.CDC.gov/hiv/prevention/pep.html?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/pep/about-pep.html](https://www.CDC.gov/hiv/prevention/pep.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/pep/about-pep.html).

3 A. Hughes, et al. "Human immunodeficiency virus type 2 (HIV2)." September 1990. National Library of Medicine. Retrieved from <https://Pubmed.NCBI.NLM.NIH.gov/2245251>.

4 "HIV/AIDS." Mayo Clinic. 02 February 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.MayoClinic.org/diseases-conditions/hiv-aids/symptoms-causes/syc-203735244>.

5 AHA Coding Clinic 2022, Q1, Volume 9, number 1, Page 36.

6 AHA Coding Clinic 2021, Q4, Volume 8, number 4, Page 81.