

Seizures

Documentation and coding: Individual & Family Plans

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For coding education questions, email CignaHealthcareHCPeducation@CignaHealthcare.com.

It is 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,¹ 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.

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

Definition²

A seizure is uncontrolled electrical activity between neurons causing temporary abnormalities in muscle, involuntary movements (automatism), or an altered state of awareness.

Seizure events

- Single event: Acute cause
- Recurring: Epilepsy

Types of seizures

Focal seizures

- Focal (partial): Starts in one area but spreads, causing tonic-clonic seizures (lasting longer than five minutes)³ and possibly respiratory issues and injury
- Focal aware (simple partial-event): Stays in one motor or sensory area with no loss of awareness
- Focal unaware (complex partial-event): Involves a large area of the brain and causes altered awareness

Generalized onset seizures (may be genetic)

- Absence (petit mal) seizure
- Childhood absence epilepsy: Causes brief staring episodes in children aged 4–7 and is usually outgrown
- Juvenile absence epilepsy: Starts later; may last into adulthood and may develop into tonic-clonic seizures
- Myoclonic seizure: Causes sudden jerking of the body or limbs on both sides of the body in clusters

- Juvenile myoclonic seizure (JME): Occurs in adolescents with tonic-clonic seizures
- Lennox-Gastaut syndrome: Causes multiple seizure types, including tonic, atonic, and myoclonic
- Tonic-clonic seizures (formerly called grand mal seizures): Can develop from focal seizures, from generalized onset seizures that occur alone or with other syndromes, or from continuous cluster of myoclonic seizures, such as JME.

Tonic-atonic seizure: Causes sudden arm stiffness, usually in individuals with multiple brain injuries. intellectual disability

Documentation and coding tips

Document and use International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) codes to describe the specificity.

- Location (frontal, occipital, psychomotor, generalized)
- Refractory – not controlled with medication
- Impairment of consciousness
- Not intractable – not hard to control
- Intractable – hard to control
- Without status epilepticus – lasting less than five minutes and not having more than one in five minutes
- With status epilepticus – lasting more than five minutes or having more than one in five minutes

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

² "Types of Epilepsy." John Hopkins Medicine. 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.HopkinsMedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/epilepsy/types-of-seizures>.

³ "What is Epilepsy?" Epilepsy Foundation. 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.Epilepsy.com/what-is-epilepsy>.

Epilepsy and recurrent seizures

ICD-10 code	Description	Additional characters to use	ICD-10 code	Description	Additional characters to use
G40.0-	Localization-related (focal) (partial) idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with seizures of localized onset	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.5-	Epileptic seizures due to external causes	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus
G40.1-	Localization-related (focal) (partial) symptomatic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with simple partial seizures	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.80	Other epilepsy	Not intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 2 – Without status epilepticus Intractable – 3 – With status epilepticus 4 – Without status epilepticus
G40.2-	Localization-related (focal) (partial) symptomatic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes with complex partial seizures	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.81	Lennox-Gastaut syndrome	Not intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 2 – Without status epilepticus Intractable – 3 – With status epilepticus 4 – Without status epilepticus
G40.3-	Generalized idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes <i>Note: Also code MERRF syndrome, if applicable (E88.42).</i>	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.82	Epileptic spasms	Not intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 2 – Without status epilepticus Intractable – 3 – With status epilepticus 4 – Without status epilepticus
G40.A-	Absence epileptic syndrome	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.83	Dravet syndrome	Intractable – 3 – With status epilepticus 4 – Without status epilepticus 9 – Other seizures <i>Excludes post-traumatic seizure (R56.1), recurrent seizures (G40.909), and seizure NOS (R56.9)</i>
G40.B-	Juvenile myoclonic epilepsy	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.84-	KCNQ2 related epilepsy	Not intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 2 – Without status epilepticus Intractable – 3 – With status epilepticus 4 – Without status epilepticus
G40.4-	Other generalized idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndromes	Not intractable – 01– With status epilepticus 09– Without status epilepticus Intractable – 11– With status epilepticus 19– Without status epilepticus	G40.90	Epilepsy, unspecified, not retractable	Not intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 0 – Without status epilepticus (epilepsy NOS, recurrent NOS, seizure disorder NOS)
G40.42	Cyclin-dependent kinase-like 5 deficiency disorder	Use additional code to identify manifestations – e.g., cortical blindness (H47.61-) or global development delay (F88).	G40.91	Epilepsy, unspecified, intractable	Intractable – 1 – With status epilepticus 9 – Without status epilepticus

Post-traumatic seizure

ICD-10 code	Description
R56.1	Post-traumatic seizures
R56.9	Unspecified convulsions (seizure NOS)

Other paralytic syndromes

ICD-10 code	Description
G83.84	Todd's paralysis (postepileptic)