

ICD-10-CM Documentation and Coding Best Practices

Heart Failure

Overview

Heart Failure is a chronic, progressive condition in which the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs for blood and oxygen. The weakening of the heart's pumping ability causes:

- The buildup of fluid in the feet, ankles and legs – called edema
- Blood and fluid to back up into the lungs – causing shortness of breath (dyspnea), orthopnea, or persistent coughing
- Fatigue, weakness, or lightheadedness
- Confusion, impaired thinking, or decreased ability to concentrate
- Irregular or fast heartbeat

Causes

Most people who develop heart failure have had another condition first that either damaged the heart or caused it to work too hard. Common causes include:

- CAD
- HTN
- Diabetes
- Endocarditis (faulty heart valves)
- Congenital heart disease
- Severe lung disease
- Cardiomyopathy
- Sleep apnea
- Obesity

Acute Heart Failure Less commonly, an otherwise healthy heart can become temporarily unable to keep up with the body's needs. In these cases, the person may experience heart failure symptoms until the underlying problem is identified and treated. This can happen in:

- Severe anemia
- Hyperthyroidism
- Arrhythmia
- Pulmonary embolism
- Severe infections or allergic reactions

Types of Heart Failure

Heart failure can affect the heart's left, right, or both sides and it can be acute, chronic, or acute-on-chronic.

- **Left-sided heart failure**, or *left ventricular (LV) heart failure* – failure of the left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart, to pump blood out to the body effectively. Accumulation of excess fluid behind the left ventricle causes dyspnea, orthopnea, paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea, and/or acute pulmonary edema. There are two different types of left-sided heart failure which call for different treatment approaches:
 - ❖ **Systolic heart failure**, aka *heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF)* – the left ventricle loses its ability to contract normally. The heart can't pump with enough force to push enough blood into circulation.
 - ❖ **Diastolic heart failure**, aka *heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF)* – the left ventricle loses its ability to relax normally because the muscle has become stiff. The heart can't fill properly with blood during the resting period between each beat.

- **Right-sided heart failure**, or *right ventricular (RV) heart failure* – failure of the right ventricle to move blood returning from systemic circulation into the lungs. Blood backs up in the body’s veins, causing systemic venous congestion (distended neck veins), pitting edema of the lower extremities or other dependent portions of the body, enlarged tender liver, and/or ascites.
- **Acute heart failure** develops suddenly and symptoms are initially severe. With proper diagnosis and treatment, it may improve rapidly and last for only a short period.
- **Chronic heart failure** develops slowly and the onset of symptoms may be gradual. Treatment is aimed at managing the underlying cause, minimizing symptoms, and preventing the heart failure from becoming worse.
- **Acute on chronic heart failure** occurs when there is an acute decompensation of chronic heart failure.

ICD -10-CM Codes:

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| ▪ I50.1 Left ventricular failure, unspecified | ▪ I50.810 Right heart failure, unspecified |
| ▪ I50.20 Systolic (congestive) heart failure, unspecified | ▪ I50.811 Acute right heart failure |
| ▪ I50.21 Acute systolic (congestive) heart failure | ▪ I50.812 Chronic right heart failure |
| ▪ I50.22 Chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure | ▪ I50.813 Acute on chronic right heart failure |
| ▪ I50.23 Acute on chronic systolic (congestive) HF | ▪ I50.814 Right heart failure due to left heart failure
(Code also: Type of left heart failure, if known) |
| ▪ I50.30 Diastolic (congestive) heart failure, unspecified | ▪ I50.82 Biventricular heart failure
(Code also: Type of left heart failure, if known) |
| ▪ I50.31 Acute diastolic (congestive) heart failure | ▪ I50.83 High output heart failure |
| ▪ I50.32 Chronic diastolic (congestive) heart failure | ▪ I50.84 End stage heart failure
(Code also: Type of heart failure, if known) |
| ▪ I50.33 Acute on chronic diastolic (congestive) HF | ▪ I50.89 Other heart failure |
| ▪ I50.40 Combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) HF, NOS | ▪ I50.9 Heart failure, unspecified |
| ▪ I50.41 Acute combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) HF | |
| ▪ I50.42 Chronic combined systolic and diastolic (congestive) HF | |
| ▪ I50.43 Acute on chronic combined systolic and diastolic HF | |

Documentation Guidance

When documenting heart failure, include the following:

- ✓ Type – systolic, diastolic, etc.
- ✓ Acuity – acute, chronic, etc.
- ✓ Disease status – stable, improved, etc.
- ✓ Treatment plan – medicines, lifestyle changes, etc.

Coding Guidance

- *Congestive heart failure* – The term congestive heart failure refers to the back up of fluid into the lungs and tissues. Assign code *I50.9, heart failure NOS* for a diagnosis of congestive heart failure.
- *“Exacerbated” or “Decompensated” heart failure* – Coding guidelines advise that “exacerbation” and “decompensation” indicate an acute flare-up of a chronic condition. When systolic or diastolic heart failure is described in these terms, the appropriate code indicating *acute on chronic* heart failure should be assigned.
- *Heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF)* – Heart failure with reduced ejection fraction is a contemporary term that refers to systolic heart failure. Select a code for *systolic heart failure* with this diagnosis.
- *Heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF)* – HFpEF refers to *diastolic heart failure* and should be coded as such.
- *Heart failure with systolic/diastolic dysfunction* – When the documentation links either systolic or diastolic dysfunction with heart failure, report as systolic/diastolic heart failure. For example, ‘acute congestive heart failure with diastolic dysfunction’ is coded with *I50.31, Acute diastolic (congestive) heart failure*.