

Closing Gaps & Meeting Metrics

Coding Tips & Best Practices

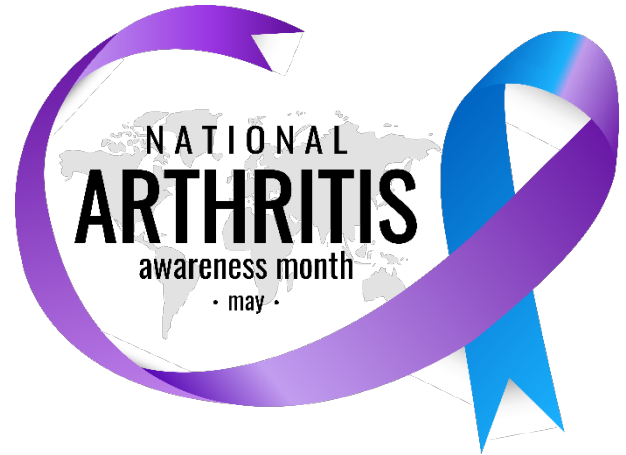
May 2024

Arthritis

The annual observance of Arthritis Awareness Month during May helps raise awareness about arthritis, its impact on individuals' lives, and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.

Arthritis affects adults of all ages, and its prevalence increases as people age. Based on data from the National Health Interview Survey, approximately 53.2 million adults in the United States were diagnosed with some form of arthritis between 2019 and 2021.

Almost 47.3% of adults 65 years and older reported being diagnosed with arthritis.



Types of Arthritis

Arthritis causes inflammation of the joints, leading to pain, stiffness, and swelling. There are many distinct types of arthritis.

Osteoarthritis

Degenerative joint disease, associated with damage to the tissues in the joints. Although osteoarthritis can damage any joint, the disease most commonly affects joints in the hands, knees, hips, and spine. Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis and is more common in older people.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Disease that leads to inflammation of the joints and surrounding tissues. An autoimmune disease, rheumatoid arthritis occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's tissues. Rheumatoid arthritis affects the lining of the joints, causing painful swelling that can result in bone erosion and joint deformity.

In some individuals, rheumatoid arthritis can affect a variety of body systems such as the skin, eyes, lungs, or blood vessels.

Gouty Arthritis (Gout)

A type of inflammatory arthritis that causes pain and swelling in the joints. Gout happens when elevated levels of urate (uric acid) build up in the body over a long time.

In some cases, urate forms needle-like crystals, which can form in the joints causing gout.

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Types of Arthritis, continued

Psoriatic Arthritis

Progressive inflammatory condition of the joints and locations where the tendons and ligaments attach to the bones (entheses). Psoriatic arthritis is an autoimmune condition. Generally, people who develop psoriatic arthritis already have psoriasis (a skin disease) when they are diagnosed. However, other people experience joint pain before the skin rash. Psoriatic arthritis is categorized into five types:

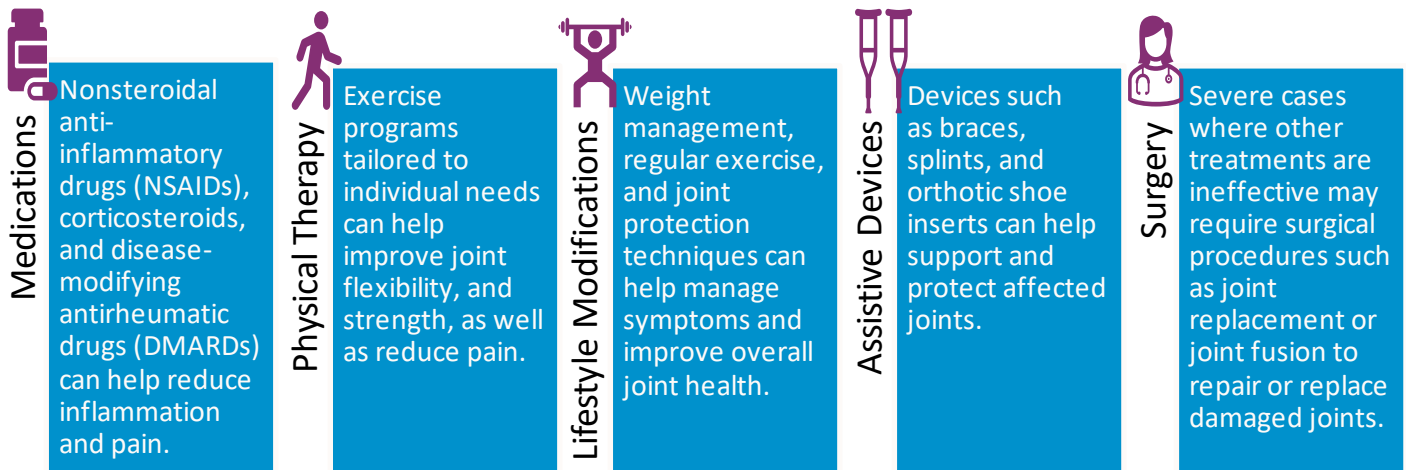
- **Distal interphalangeal predominant:** Affects mainly the ends of the fingers and toes. The distal interphalangeal joints are those closest to the nails. In this type of arthropathy, pitting, discoloration, ridging, and thickening are noted in the nails.
- **Asymmetric oligoarticular:** Involves different joints on each side of the body.
- **Symmetric polyarthritis:** Affects the same joints on each side.
- **Spondylitis:** Joint involvement that primarily involves spondylitis (spondyl – spine, itis – inflammation), in the joints between the vertebrae in the spine.
- **Arthritis mutilans:** Psoriatic arthritis mutilans is a severe, deforming form of arthritis. It gets progressively worse over months or even years, causing resorption of bones and severe joint damage. It is not a common condition, affecting less than 5% of patients with arthropathic psoriasis.

Diagnosis and Tests

A healthcare provider can diagnose arthritis using a combination of medical history, physical examination, imaging tests (e.g., X-rays, MRI), and sometimes laboratory tests (e.g., blood test, joint fluid analysis) to confirm the diagnosis and determine its type and severity.

Management and Treatment

Arthritis has no cure. Treatment options can vary depending on the type and severity of the condition.



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Documentation and Coding Tips

It is crucial to accurately document the type of arthritis present in the medical record. Be sure to specify the affected joints, and note the laterality and systemic involvement (if applicable).

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis diagnosis codes are in the ICD-10-CM under categories M15.- through M19.-.

- M15.- Polyosteoarthritis
- M16.- Osteoarthritis of hip
- M17.- Osteoarthritis of knee
- M18.- Osteoarthritis of first carpometacarpal joint
- M19.- Other and unspecified osteoarthritis

When the spinal cord is affected, assign a diagnosis code from category M47.-

- M47.- Spondylosis

Specify whether osteoarthritis is primary, secondary, or generalized.

When the type of osteoarthritis is not specified in the medical record, the default is “primary.”

When the specific site of the osteoarthritis is not documented, assign diagnosis code M19.90 Unspecified osteoarthritis, unspecified site.

Code osteoarthritis that involves multiple sites not specified and generalized as M15.9 Polyosteoarthritis, unspecified.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis codes are in the ICD-10-CM under categories M05.- and M06.-.

M05.- Rheumatoid arthritis with rheumatoid factor

- Rheumatoid arthritis classified under this category includes rheumatoid arthritis and associated conditions (combination codes) that have an identified rheumatoid factor present.
- Do not assume the presence of a rheumatoid factor when a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis is documented in the medical record.

M06.- Other rheumatoid arthritis

- Rheumatoid arthritis classified under this category includes rheumatoid arthritis without rheumatoid factor with site and comorbidity.

The classification assumes associated conditions are related to rheumatoid arthritis. Consult the Alphabetic Index “arthritis, rheumatoid, with (e.g., carditis, myopathy, polyneuropathy, rheumatoid factor, etc.).”

If applicable, assign a diagnosis code from subcategory Z79.6- Long term (current) use of immunomodulators and immunosuppressants to capture the long-term use of immunosuppressants therapy.

Gouty Arthritis

Gouty arthritis diagnosis codes are in the ICD-10-CM under category M10.-. Additional characters distinguish whether the condition is idiopathic, due to lead, drug induced, due to renal impairment, other secondary gout, unspecified gout.

- M10.0- Idiopathic gout
- M10.1- Lead-induced gout

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Gouty Arthritis, continued

- M10.2- Drug-induced gout
- M10.3- Gout due to renal impairment
- M10.4- Other secondary gout
- M10.9- Gout, unspecified

When gout is specified as chronic, assign a diagnosis code from category M1A- Chronic gout. Additional characters identify the presence or absence of tophus (crystallized uric acid deposit in the soft tissues, synovial tissues, or in bones near the joints).

Psoriatic Arthritis

Psoriatic arthritis diagnosis codes are in the ICD-10-CM under category L40.5-Arthropathic psoriasis. This condition has various forms, described by distinctive names. Many of these forms have been assigned different diagnosis codes in the ICD-10-CM code set.

- L40.50 Arthropathic psoriasis, unspecified
- L40.51 Distal interphalangeal psoriatic arthropathy
- L40.52 Psoriatic arthritis mutilans
- L40.53 Psoriatic spondylitis
- L40.54 Psoriatic juvenile arthropathy
- L40.59 Other psoriatic arthropathy

References

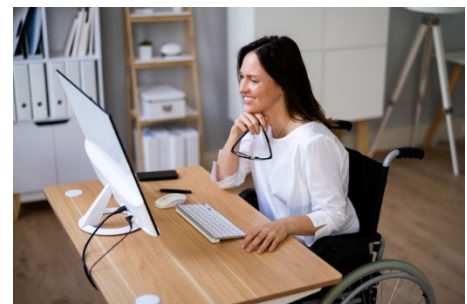
- [Arthritis Related Statistics | CDC](#)
- [NIAMS.NIH.gov/Health-Topics/Arthritis](#)
- [CMS.gov/Medicare/Coding-Billing/ICD-10-Codes/2024-ICD-10-CM](#)
- American Hospital Association Coding Clinic

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