

Risk Coding Tips and Tools

Class III Obesity

The new obesity class III code aims to reduce stigma by using clinically relevant terms that focus on severity rather than possible offensive descriptors.

Healthcare providers are encouraged to use terms like "**class III obesity**" instead of "morbid obesity due to excess calories," encouraging a more supportive and respectful patient-provider relationship.

Class 3 obesity (E66.813) = Body mass index (BMI) 40 or greater. This is preferred as it improves specificity of the code.

Morbid obesity (E66.01) = BMI 40 or greater alone, or BMI 35 plus health complications related to obesity.

 Important information when coding class 3 obesity:

- Document the diagnosis of "class 3 obesity" clearly in the note
- Document specific BMI plus health complications
- The BMI alone will not allow us to capture the obesity code

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Physician Documentation Example

Example 1:

Assessment/Plan:

Obesity, class 3

- BMI of 42.5

Patient reports significant knee pain likely related to their weight. Treatment plan includes a low-calorie diet, regular exercise, and referral to a registered dietitian for nutritional counseling. Further evaluation for potential bariatric surgery will be discussed at the next visit.

Example 2:

Assessment/Plan:

Atraumatic right knee pain

- Patient complains about increased right knee pain, this condition could be related to weight
- Treatment plan includes anti-inflammatory course, x-ray of right knee, lifestyle modifications for weight management

Obesity, class 3

- BMI 42.5

Example 3:

Assessment/Plan:

Obesity

- BMI 42

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas. (n.d.). *Obesity and morbid obesity: Documentation and coding.*

<https://www.bcbstx.com/docs/provider/tx/claims/claims-filing/coding-billing-and-bundling/morbid-obesity-doc-coding-tip.pdf>

Cleveland Clinic. (2025, February 19). *Class III obesity (formerly known as morbid obesity).*

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21989-class-iii-obesity-formerly-known-as-morbid-obesity>

Shaughnessy, M. (2024, September 9). *Get to know the 2025 ICD-10-CM code set: News you can use.* AAPC.

[https://www.aapc.com/codes/coding-newsletters/my-pediatric-coding-alert/news-you-can-use-get-to-know-the-2025-icd-10-cm-code-set-178643-article#:~:text=Obesity%2C%20class%202\),E66.,could%20only%20be%20captured%20by](https://www.aapc.com/codes/coding-newsletters/my-pediatric-coding-alert/news-you-can-use-get-to-know-the-2025-icd-10-cm-code-set-178643-article#:~:text=Obesity%2C%20class%202),E66.,could%20only%20be%20captured%20by)

Welcome, A. (2023, April 6). *Shifting from "morbid obesity" to "class III obesity".* Obesity Medicine Association.

<https://obesitymedicine.org/blog/shifting-from-morbid-obesity-to-class-iii-obesity>

You can find this resource and others like it in the OHN Risk Coding Corner at
www.OrlandoHealth.com/Network/Resources.

You can also contact us at RiskCoding@OrlandoHealth.com for additional questions or support needs.