

# Guidance on Documentation and Coding for Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa

## Overview of disorders of eating disorders (F50)

<p><b>Anorexia Nervosa</b> is defined as a psychological eating disorder characterized by an intense fear of gaining weight and an unrealistic perception of body image that perpetuates that feeling of being fat or having too much fat. Avoidance of food and restrictive or unhealthy eating are common.</p>	<p><b>Signs and symptoms of anorexia nervosa</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malnutrition</li> <li>• Obsessive behaviors</li> <li>• Abnormal blood counts</li> <li>• Irregular heartbeat</li> <li>• Fatigue, dizziness, or fainting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> <li>• Amenorrhea</li> <li>• Dry skin/brittle nails</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> <li>• Bone loss</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bulimia Nervosa</b> is defined as an episodic pattern of overeating (binge eating) followed by purging or extreme exercise accompanied by an awareness of the abnormal eating pattern with a fear of not being able to stop eating.</p>	<p><b>Signs and symptoms of bulimia nervosa</b></p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irregular heartbeat</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Bloating/abnormal bowel functioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sores, scars, or calluses on the knuckles or back of hands (Russell’s sign)</li> <li>• Severe dental erosion from vomiting</li> <li>• Changes in the color, shape, length of teeth</li> </ul>

## Documentation guidance

- Document all pertinent physical and behavioral observations
- Document a treatment plan
  - Medication such as (SSRIs, anti-psychotics, anti-cholinergic)
- Document referrals to specialists, laboratory tests and diagnostic studies and incorporate abnormal findings into progress note

## Key Difference – Anorexia vs. anorexia nervosa

The key difference between anorexia and anorexia nervosa is that anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder characterized by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat. It is a well-recognized disease entity usually categorized under psychiatric disorders. Anorexia (R63.0) refers to the loss of appetite or no desire to eat that can occur due to many different factors and not necessarily by a disease condition.

(continued)

## ICD-10-CM Code information

### F50 Eating Disorders

Excludes Anorexia NOS (R63.0)  
Feeding problems of newborn (P92.-)  
Polyphagia (R63.2)  
Feeding difficulties (R63.3)  
Feeding disorder in infancy or childhood (F98.2-)

**Tip:** Assign additional code for BMI from category Z68. Documented BMI can be based on documentation from clinicians who are not the patient's provider.

**F50.00** Anorexia nervosa, unspecified

**F50.01** Anorexia nervosa, restricting type

**F50.02** Anorexia nervosa, binge eating/purging type

- Excludes bulimia nervosa (F50.2)

**F50.2** Bulimia nervosa

- Excludes anorexia nervosa, binge eating/purging type (F50.02)

### R63 Symptoms and signs concerning food and fluid intake

Excludes Bulimia NOS (F50.2)  
Loss of appetite

**R63.0** Anorexia

- Excludes anorexia nervosa (F50.0-)
- Loss of appetite of nonorganic origin (F50.89)

**Tip:** Assign an additional code from category Z68 when BMI is documented. BMI can be based on documentation from clinicians who are not the patient's provider.

## References

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2020). ICD-10-CM official guidelines for coding and reporting: FY 2024. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/2021-coding-guidelines-updated-12162020.pdf>

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