

## Aftercare vs. Follow-Up Visit Coding

**In an effort to aid Health Information Management Coding and Medical Billing Professionals with ICD-10-PCS, the following coding tip is provided with an educational intent.**

### AFTERCARE

- Initial treatment of a disease or injury has been performed.
- Patient requires continued care during the healing or recovery phase, or for the long term consequences of the disease; typically this is the global period.
- Aftercare for injuries, during the healing and recovery phase, should be coded with the injury code and the appropriate 7th character for subsequent encounter rather than a Z code.
- NOT reported if treatment is currently being directed at an acute disease or acute injury.

**Example:** Return visit for unspecified fracture of the lower end of the right humerus. Since the patient is returning for treatment during the healing and recovery phase, the diagnosis code for the injury S42.401 would have a 7th character of “D” to indicate the encounter is a subsequent encounter for aftercare with routine healing.

### FOLLOW-UP

- Implies the disease, condition, or injury has been fully treated and no longer exists.
- Used to explain continuing surveillance following completed treatment of a disease, condition, or injury.
- Should not be confused with aftercare codes that explain current treatment for a healing condition or its sequelae.
- May be used in conjunction with history codes to provide the full picture of the healed condition and its treatment.
- When used together, the follow-up code is sequenced first, followed by the history code.

**Example:** Follow-up visit for patient after completing a regime of IV antibiotics for recurrent pneumonia; now resolved. Z09 for follow up not related to malignant neoplasm is sequenced first followed by the history of (recurrent) pneumonia, Z87.01, to describe the condition now resolved.

Reference: 2016 Official ICD-10 PCS Coding Guidelines ([cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Downloads/2016-Official-ICD-10-PCS-Coding-Guidelines-.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/Downloads/2016-Official-ICD-10-PCS-Coding-Guidelines-.pdf))

*Coding Clinic is the official resource and authority for ICD-10 coding rules and conventions.*

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California Health Information Association, AHIMA Affiliate, 2016.