



START SMART CODING TIP

Atherosclerosis

Native arteries of the extremities – subcategory I70.2-

RELEVANT CODING CLINICS

4Q 2020

3Q 2018

SUBCATEGORY I70.2-

Atherosclerosis of Extremity Arteries

Native arteries of the extremities – classified to I70.2-, with laterality



HOW I70.2- WORKS

Atherosclerosis of the native arteries of the extremities is classified to subcategory **I70.2-**.

Inclusion terms identify the clinical progression of the disease.

Codes are further subdivided by **laterality** – right, left, bilateral, or unspecified.

INCLUSION TERMS IDENTIFY



Critical Limb Ischemia



With Rest Pain



With Ulceration



With Gangrene

The Fifth Character

The 5th character shows how far the disease has progressed

I70.21

Intermittent claudication.

I70.22

Rest pain – includes any intermittent claudication.

I70.23 • .24 • .25

Ulceration (includes any rest pain/ Claudication). Add **L97** with I70.23-/I70.24- and **L98.49-** with I70.25 for ulcer severity.

I70.26

Gangrene (includes any/all preceding conditions). Add **L98.49-** for ulcer severity, if applicable.

Atherosclerosis vs. Arteriosclerosis

One is specific and codeable; the other is broad and may need a query



ATHEROSCLEROSIS

A specific type of arteriosclerosis – typically called **PAD**.
Used when documentation specifies atherosclerosis, PAD, intermittent claudication, rest pain, ulcer, or gangrene.

Highly specific codes capture **symptoms and laterality**.



ARTERIOSCLEROSIS

A broad, general term meaning **“hardening of the arteries.”**
If documentation states only “arteriosclerosis,” **query** – otherwise it may default to unspecified **I70.90**.

RELATED CONCEPTS

CLI & Chronic Total Occlusion

How each is defined – and the extra code chronic total occlusion requires



CRITICAL LIMB ISCHEMIA

A severe blockage in the arteries of the lower extremities.

A diagnosis of CLI without further specificity indexes to
“atherosclerosis of the extremities with rest pain.”



CHRONIC TOTAL OCCLUSION

Hard, calcified plaque accumulates over time, causing a clinically significant decrease in blood flow.

~40% of PVD patients first present with a partial occlusion that progresses to a chronic total occlusion.

Assign **I70.92** as an additional code with subcategories I70.2- through I70.7- when a chronic total occlusion is present.

Critical Limb Ischemia

ICD-10-CM/PCS Coding Clinic, Fourth Quarter 2020 • Pages 98-99 • Effective with discharges Oct 2, 2020



QUESTION

Please clarify the correct code assignment for critical limb ischemia. There are no entries in the Index to Diseases for this condition (the Index entry for ischemia is **I99.8**), so coders may arrive at different codes.



ANSWER

Critical limb ischemia (CLI) – also known as chronic limb-threatening ischemia (CLTI) – is a severe form of **atherosclerosis of the extremities with rest pain, ulceration, and/or gangrene**. Effective Oct 1, 2020, new inclusion terms were added in the Tabular under category I70 to identify CLI codes, along with extensive new Index subentries directing users to category I70. **CLI without further specificity is coded to atherosclerosis of the extremities with rest pain.**

Diabetes with Arteriosclerotic PAD

ICD-10-CM/PCS Coding Clinic, Third Quarter 2018 • Page 4 • Effective with discharges Sept 24, 2018



QUESTION

When a diabetic patient has arteriosclerotic peripheral artery disease, should an additional code from subcategory I70.2- be assigned to describe the affected vessel and laterality?



ANSWER

E11.51

I70.2-

Yes. Assign **E11.51** (Type 2 diabetes mellitus with diabetic peripheral angiopathy without gangrene), along with an additional code from **I70.2-** to fully capture laterality, affected vessel, and additional manifestations (claudication, rest pain, etc.). **Per Official Guidelines I.B.9, multiple coding shouldn't be used when a combination code captures all elements – but when it lacks specificity, add a secondary code.**