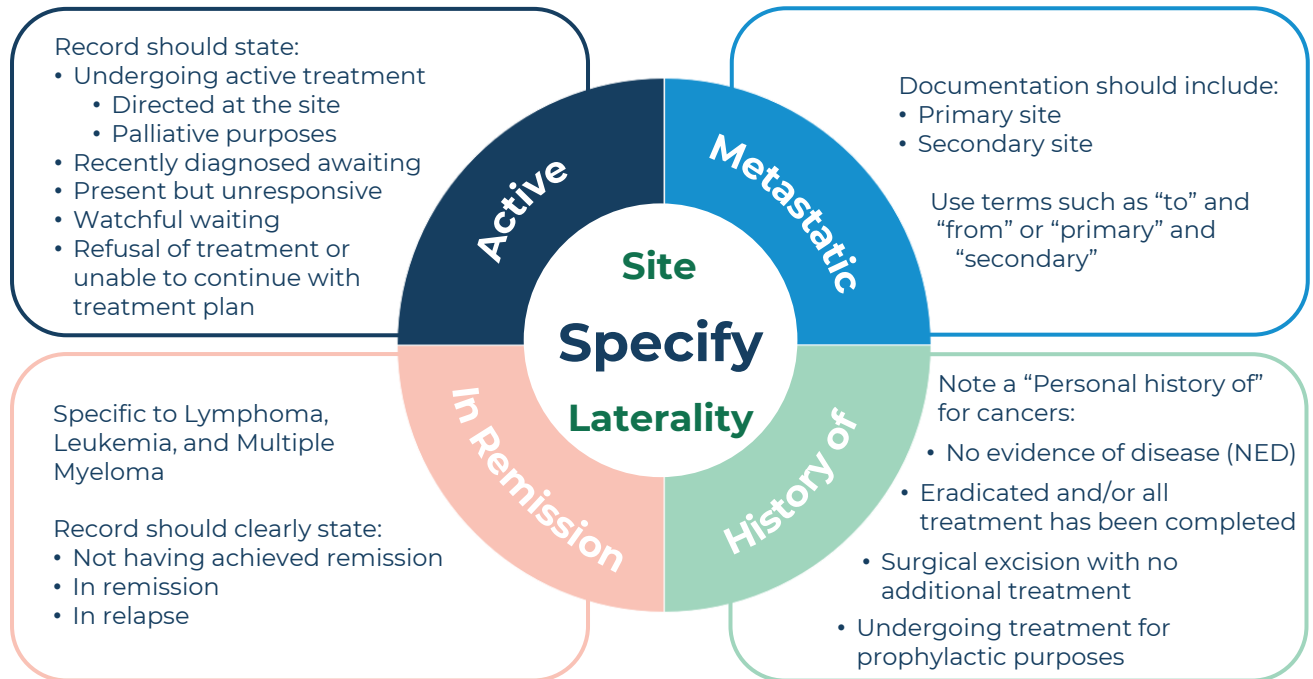


# Cancer

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal body cells, often forming a tumor. Not all tumors are cancerous; benign tumors don't spread, while malignant (cancerous) tumors can metastasize. Similarly, "neoplasm," meaning "new growth," doesn't automatically indicate cancer; it can be benign or malignant. Therefore, using "neoplasm" to describe cancer requires caution.

## Best Documentation Practices



## M.E.A.T. the Condition

Proper documentation requires at least one of these four elements be present in the documentation for each condition.



**How is the patient doing?**

Document signs, symptoms, disease progression/regression or ongoing surveillance



**What is the current state of the condition?**

Document current state, test results, medication effectiveness or response to treatment



**How will the condition be evaluated?**

Document discussion, review of records, counseling, or ordering further tests



**What is being done to help the condition?**

Document care, prescribed medications, referral to specialist or other modalities

CMS requires **annual coding and reporting of all chronic conditions**. A condition is not considered present in a given year unless it is appropriately documented and coded in that year.

# Cancer ICD-10 Category Reference Guide

This list of ICD-10 codes (containing incomplete codes) is not exhaustive. Refer to the current version of the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting, the ICD-10-CM Index to Diseases and Injuries, and the Tabular List of Diseases for a list of all ICD-10-CM codes and coding instructions. Copies of the Risk Adjustment models can be found at [www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/medicare-advantage-rates-statistics/risk-adjustment](http://www.cms.gov/medicare/payment/medicare-advantage-rates-statistics/risk-adjustment).

Cancer			
C00 – C14	Lip, oral cavity & pharynx	C51 – C58	Female genital organs
C15 – C26	Digestive organs	C60 – C63	Male genital organs
C30 – C39	Respiratory & intrathoracic organs	C64 – C68	Urinary tract
C40 – C41	Bone & articular cartilage	C69 – C72	Eye, brain & other parts of central nervous system
C43 – C44	Melanoma & malignant neoplasms of skin	C73 – C75	Thyroid & other endocrine glands
C45 – C49	Mesothelial & soft tissue	C81 - C96	Lymphoid, Hematopoietic and related tissue
C50	Breast	Z85	Personal history of

## Coding Example 1

**Documentation** **HPI:** 38 y/o female h/o breast cancer. Doing well since treatment completion. Continues on Arimidex for 5 years.  
**Mammo Results Review:** Post-op scarring s/p R lumpectomy NED; Normal L breast  
**Assessment & Plan:** H/O Breast Cancer – Continue Arimidex. F/U in 1 year.

**ICD-10 Code(s)** Z85.3 Personal history of malignant neoplasm of breast

**Rationale** The clinician indicates the left breast as the site, and that the patient's breast cancer is historical. Further evidence includes completed treatment, eradication of the disease, and recent negative mammogram results.

## Coding Example 2

**Documentation** **HPI:** Treatment for his CLL completed 2 years ago with good response. Labs WNL.  
**Assessment & Plan:** CLL, B-cell type, in remission - Doing well. 6-month labs ordered.

**ICD-10 Code(s)** C91.11 Chronic lymphocytic leukemia of B-cell type, in remission

**Rationale** The clinician clearly documents the patient's type of CLL, the patient's current remission status, and the completion of treatment, noting regular monitoring of labs.

Rev. 02.2026



NOTE: This tool is intended to assist with documentation only and not intended to take the place of clinical analysis. Information regarding any law or regulation does not constitute legal or tax advice and is subject to change based upon the issuance of new guidance and/or change in laws or regulations. Reference Official ICD-10-CM coding guidelines and manuals or electronic medical coding software for accurate ICD-10-CM codes and specificity.

The following entities, which serve the noted regions, are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association: Western and Northeastern PA: Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Highmark Choice Company, Highmark Health Insurance Company, Highmark Coverage Advantage Inc., Highmark Benefits Group Inc., First Priority Health, First Priority Life, Highmark Care Benefits Inc., Highmark Senior Health Company or Gateway Health Plan, Inc. d/b/a Highmark Wholecare. Central and Southeastern PA: Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield, Highmark Benefits Group Inc., Highmark Health Insurance Company, Highmark Choice Company, Highmark Senior Health Company or Gateway Health Plan, Inc. d/b/a Highmark Wholecare. Delaware: Highmark BCBSD Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. West Virginia: Highmark West Virginia Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Highmark Health Insurance Company. Highmark Senior Solutions Company or Highmark Health Options West Virginia Inc. d/b/a Highmark Health Options. Western NY: Highmark Western and Northeastern New York Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. Northeastern NY: Highmark Western and Northeastern New York Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield. All references to "Highmark" in this document are references to the Highmark company that is providing the member's health benefits or health benefit administration and/or to one or more of its affiliated Blue companies.