

Major Depressive Disorder (F33.xx)

Diagnosis Overview: Diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder is based on DSM-5 criteria

- Five or more symptoms during the same 2-week period and at least one of the symptoms should be either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure.
- The PHQ-9 is a tool that compiles the DSM-5 criteria into a usable questionnaire for patients in a primary care office.

Diagnosis Types | Classes:

Once the diagnosis of major depression is made, the diagnostic code is documented with respect to the **pattern** (single/recurrent), **severity** (mild/moderate/severe), or **remission status** (partial/full) based on the prior two week's history.

- MDD, single episode** describes the first episode of MDD
- MDD, recurrent** describes any subsequent episode following the first single episode with full remission being achieved after the first single episode with subsequent return of symptoms.

Consider using the PHQ-9 to assist with determining severity of active, symptomatic depression.

Partial remission describes either circumstances in which the full criteria for MDD diagnosis are not met, or a time frame of less than two months without the presence of significant symptoms.

Full remission: No significant signs or symptoms of the disturbance have been present for 2 or more months.

Risk Factors and Symptoms:

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) Depression Severity Scoring					
Total Score	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-27
Depression Severity	None	Mild	Moderate	Moderately Severe	Severe

Documentation Tips & Examples:

Documentation Tip	Documentation Tip	Documentation Tip	Documentation Tip
The severity/remission status of depression is fluid over time as it reflects the patient's clinical status during the encounter.	Patients with PHQ-9 score of less than 5 for greater than 2 months can be considered in full remission even if they are receiving treatment.	Identify the most specific code that applies to the patient at the time of the visit with respect to the pattern (single/recurrent), severity (mild/mod/severe) or remission status (partial/full) based on the prior two week's history.	It is important to document if the patient declines either medication or other recommended treatment, particularly if a medication is not being prescribed and the depression is not in remission.

Example Documentation

Major depression, moderate recurrent (F33.1). Depression has returned due to life situation. PHQ-9 today of 15. Will restart SSRI, referral for counseling and return to clinic in 2 weeks for recheck. Strict return precautions discussed for worsening or progression of symptoms.

Pearls:

A patient can be considered in remission even if they are actively receiving treatment for depression.