

Guide to Coding Heart Attacks

Use this tool to understand the different types of heart attacks, which will help you to choose and assign the correct code for patients receiving care following myocardial infarctions.

Type of Heart Attack	Clinical features & information	Coding guidelines & instructions
<p>Type 1 myocardial infarction (the “prototypical” heart attack)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically caused by eruption or erosion of atherosclerotic plaque. STEMI and non-STEMI MIs both fall within Type 1 MIs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes I21.0 – I21.2, as well as I21.3, capture Type 1 STEMI MIs. Code I21.4 captures a Type 1 NSTEMI MI and nontransmural MI. If a patient has a Type 1 NSTEMI and it evolves into a STEMI, code it as a STEMI. If a Type 1 STEMI converts to a NSTEMI due to thrombolytic therapy, code it as a STEMI. Code I21.3 for an MI documented as a Type 1 STEMI or a transmural MI of unspecified site. Code I21.9 for an MI in which no further detail is provided. Codes I21.01-I21.4 are <i>only</i> for type 1 MIs.
<p>Type 2 myocardial infarction (myocardial infarction due to demand ischemia or secondary to ischemic imbalance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurs secondary to ischemic imbalance. Happens when a condition, <i>other than coronary artery disease (CAD)</i>, causes an imbalance in myocardial oxygen supply and myocardial oxygen demand. Coronary vasospasm and endothelial dysfunction are two possible causes of Type 2 MIs. Treatment for a Type 2 MI <i>is not the same</i> as for a Type 1 MI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code I21.A1 in addition to a code for the underlying cause of the demand ischemia or ischemic imbalance. Sequence the code for the underlying cause first. Use I21.A1 whether the Type 2 MI is described as STEMI or NSTEMI. Do <i>not</i> use I24.8 to capture demand ischemia in these scenarios.
<p>Type 3 myocardial infarction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurs when a patient presents with death from a presumed cardiac condition but confirmatory cardiac biomarkers are not available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign I21.A9. Follow tabular instruction in the form of “code also” and “code first” notes to capture associated complications, and for coding of postprocedural myocardial infarctions during or following cardiac surgery.