

# Evaluation and E/M Services Level of Medical Decision Making (MDM)

Revisions effective January 1, 2023

| Level of MDM<br>(Based on 2 out of 3<br>Elements of MDM) | Number and Complexity<br>of Problems Addressed  | Amount and/or Complexity of Data to be Reviewed and Analyzed<br><i>*Each unique test, order, or document contributes to the combination of 2 or<br/>combination of 3 in Category 1 below</i>   | Risk of Complications and/or Morbidity or Mortality of<br>Patient Management  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Straightforward</b>                                   | <b>Minimal</b><br>• 1 self-limited or minor problem   | Minimal or none  | Minimal risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment   |
| <b>Low</b>   | <b>Low</b><br>• 2 or more self-limited or minor problems;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 stable chronic illness;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 acute, uncomplicated illness or injury<br>• 1 stable, acute illness;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 acute, uncomplicated illness or injury requiring hospital inpatient or observation level of care                               | <b>Limited</b> (Must meet the requirements of at least 1 of the 2 categories)<br><b>Category 1:</b> Tests and documents<br>Any combination of 2 from the following:<br>• Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*;<br>• review of the result(s) of each unique test*;<br>• ordering of each unique test*<br><u>or</u><br><b>Category 2:</b> Assessment requiring an independent historian(s)<br>(For the categories of independent interpretation of tests and discussion of management or test interpretation, see moderate or high)   | Low risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment   |
| <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>Moderate</b><br>• 1 or more chronic illnesses with exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment;<br><u>or</u><br>• 2 or more stable chronic illnesses;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 undiagnosed new problem with uncertain prognosis;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 acute illness with systemic symptoms;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 acute complicated injury | <b>Moderate</b> (Must meet the requirements of at least 1 out of 3 categories)<br><b>Category 1:</b> Tests, documents, or independent historian(s)<br>• Any combination of 3 from the following:<br>• Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*;<br>• Review of the result(s) of each unique test*;<br>• Ordering of each unique test*;<br>• Assessment requiring an independent historian(s)<br><u>or</u><br><b>Category 2:</b> Independent interpretation of tests<br>• Independent interpretation of a test performed by another physician/other qualified health care professional (not separately reported);<br><u>or</u><br><b>Category 3:</b> Discussion of management or test interpretation<br>• Discussion of management or test interpretation with external physician/other qualified health care professional/appropriate source (not separately reported)  | Moderate risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment<br><b>Examples only:</b><br>• Prescription drug management<br>• Decision regarding minor surgery with identified patient or procedure risk factors<br>• Decision regarding elective major surgery without identified patient or procedure risk factors<br>• Diagnosis or treatment significantly limited by social determinants of health  |
| <b>High</b>  | <b>High</b><br>• 1 or more chronic illnesses with severe exacerbation, progression, or side effects of treatment;<br><u>or</u><br>• 1 acute or chronic illness or injury that poses a threat to life or bodily function   | <b>Extensive</b> (Must meet the requirements of at least 2 out of 3 categories)<br><b>Category 1:</b> Tests, documents, or independent historian(s)<br>• Any combination of 3 from the following:<br>• Review of prior external note(s) from each unique source*;<br>• Review of the result(s) of each unique test*;<br>• Ordering of each unique test*;<br>• Assessment requiring an independent historian(s)<br><u>or</u><br><b>Category 2:</b> Independent interpretation of tests<br>• Independent interpretation of a test performed by another physician/other qualified health care professional (not separately reported);<br><u>or</u><br><b>Category 3:</b> Discussion of management or test interpretation<br>• Discussion of management or test interpretation with external physician/other qualified health care professional/appropriate source (not separately reported) | High risk of morbidity from additional diagnostic testing or treatment<br><b>Examples only:</b><br>• Drug therapy requiring intensive monitoring for toxicity<br>• Decision regarding elective major surgery with identified patient or procedure risk factors<br>• Decision regarding emergency major surgery<br>• Decision regarding hospitalization or escalation of hospital-level care<br>• Decision not to resuscitate or to de-escalate care because of poor prognosis<br>• Parenteral controlled substances |

For more information, see: [aad.org/practicecenter](https://aad.org/practicecenter)

\*The level of MDM is determined by a combination of the three elements.  
Qualifying for a specific code requires that two of the three elements for that level of MDM be met or exceeded.