

MDM Guide

The American Medical Association (AMA) allows for total time on the date of the encounter or medical decision making (MDM) to determine evaluation and management (E/M) level of billing. MDM is based on three elements: (1) the number and complexity of problems addressed at the visit; (2) the amount and/or complexity of data reviewed and analyzed; and (3) the risk of complications, morbidity, or mortality associated with the patient's condition or management decisions. The combination of the MDM elements is then used to determine the E/M visit level. The American Medical Association (AMA) allows for total time on the date of the encounter or medical decision making (MDM) to determine evaluation and management (E/M) level of billing. MDM is based on three elements: (1) the number and complexity of problems addressed at the visit; (2) the amount and/or complexity of data reviewed and analyzed; and (3) the risk of complications, morbidity, or mortality associated with the patient's condition or management decisions. The combination of the MDM elements is then used to determine the E/M visit level.

MDM Levels:

Level	Problems	Data	Risk
Straightforward	Minor problem	Minimal	Minimal
Low	Stable or uncomplicated	1 – 2 items	Low Risk
Moderate	Worsening or ≥ 2 chronic	3+ items or discussion	Rx management
High	Life threatening	Extensive	Hospitalization/ high-risk meds

MDM Level	New Patient	Established Patient
Straightforward	99202	99212
Low	99203	99213
Moderate	99204	99214
High	99205	99215

PROBLEMS (What is being treated?)

- **Low:**
 - 1 stable chronic illness
 - 1 acute uncomplicated illness
- **Moderate:**
 - ≥ 2 stable chronic illnesses
 - 1 chronic illness worsening
 - New problem with uncertain prognosis
- **High:**
 - Severe exacerbation
 - Threat to life or organ (e.g., sepsis)



DATA (What was reviewed/done?)

- **Low:**
 - 1–2 labs, notes, or tests
- **Moderate:**
 - 3+ labs/tests/notes
 - OR discussion with another provider
 - OR independent interpretation
- **High:**
 - Multiple data sources
 - Discussion with external provider

RISK (What could happen?)

- **Low:**
 - OTC meds
- **Moderate:**
 - Prescription drug management
 - Minor procedure with risk
- **High:**
 - Hospitalization
 - IV high-risk meds
 - Life-threatening condition

Documentation Must-Haves:

- Status of conditions (stable, worsening, improving)
- Data reviewed (list labs, imaging, notes)
- Risk clearly stated (“prescription drug management”)
- Intensive drug monitoring (what drug, reason for monitoring, what labs/tests were done for that monitoring)