Sepsis Coding Decision Tree in ICD-9 and ICD-10

Follow the directions specified in this tool, created by Brandi Whitemyer, HCS-D, product specialist for DecisionHealth in Gaithersburg, Md., to help you assign the right code(s) for sepsis and related conditions.

What's the diagnosis in ICD-9?

- Bacteremia Code 790.7 (Bacteremia); use an additional code to identify causative organism (041.x, Bacterial infection in conditions classified elsewhere and of unspecified site).
- **Septicemia** Choose a code from 038.xx (Septicemia) depending on the information given.
 - Is sepsis also present?
 - Yes. also assign 995.9X (Sepsis or Severe Sepsis)
 - No. 038.xx code is sufficient Tip! Query physician to verify that no diagnosis of Sepsis is present. In ICD-10, Septicemia may not be coded alone (codes for Sepsis include Septicemia).
- SIRS (Systemic inflammatory response syndrome) Identify the underlying trauma or infection then choose a code from 995.9x (Systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS)) depending on the information given.
 - SIRS is defined as a clinical response to an insult, infection or trauma. The causative infection or trauma should be coded first. Tip! 995.9x codes may never be assigned as primary!
- **Sepsis** Code first the underlying systemic infection, such as 038.0 (Streptococcal septicemia), and then assign 995.91 for the sepsis
- Severe sepsis Code first the underlying systemic infection, such as 038.0 (Streptococcal septicemia), then code 995.92 for severe sepsis, and finally code the specific type of organ failure, such as 584.9 for acute renal failure.
 - Tip! Severe Sepsis is defined as Sepsis with associated organ dysfunction.
- Septic shock Code first the underlying systemic infection, such as 038.0 (Streptococcal septicemia), then code 995.92 for severe sepsis, then code 785.52 for septic shock and finally assign the code for the specific type of organ failure inherent to septic shock, such as 584.9 for acute renal failure.

What's the diagnosis in ICD-10?

- Bacteremia Code R78.81 (Bacteremia).
- Septicemia There is NO code for septicemia in ICD-10.
 Instead, you're directed to a combination 'A' code for sepsis to indicate the underlying infection, such A41.9 (Sepsis, unspecified organism) for septicemia with no further detail. Note: 'A' codes for Sepsis in ICD-10 include both the underlying infection (septicemia) and the body's inflammatory reaction.
- SIRS (Systemic inflammatory response syndrome) -
 - First, determine if the SIRS is related to an infectious origin.
 - If Yes, assign a code for Sepsis.
 - Follow instructions for Sepsis coding and determine if organ dysfunction is present. If it is, you'll need to include a code from R65.2-, Severe Sepsis.
 - If No, assign a code first for the underlying cause of the SIRS (such as T67.0- for heatstroke), followed by R65.1for SIRS of non-infectious origin.
- Sepsis Choose the correct 'A' code to indicate the sepsis.
 Simply locate the code for the correct type of infectious process that is causing the sepsis, such as A41.51 (Sepsis due to Escherichia coli [E. coli]). Note: The underlying systemic infection and the body's inflammatory response to it are captured in one combination code.
- **Severe sepsis** First choose the correct code for the underlying infection, such as A41.51 (Sepsis due to Escherichia coli [E. coli]), then code the severe sepsis, such as R65.20 (Severe sepsis without septic shock) and then assign an additional code for the organ dysfunction it's causing, such as K72.00 (Acute and subacute hepatic failure without coma).
- Septic shock Code first the underlying infection (for example A41.51, Sepsis due to Escherichia coli [E. coli]), then code the severe sepsis combination code that indicates the presence of septic shock (R65.21, Severe sepsis with septic shock) and lastly code the associated organ failure (such as J96.00, Acute respiratory failure, unspecified whether with hypoxia or hypercapnia).