



Chronic Hepatitis

Quick Reference Guide

2026

Table of Contents

1. CLINICAL SNAPSHOT	3
HCC/RAF V28 Mapping	3
2. RECOGNITION AND DIAGNOSIS	5
Medicare Part B Covered Screenings and Workup (older adults, at-risk population)	6
Subtle Early Signs in Older Adults (>65)	7
Geriatric Risk Factors	8
Diagnostic Systems and Staging Thresholds	8
Common Oversights	13
Key Differentials in Elderly	14
Comorbidity Screening	14
3. MEAT DOCUMENTATION ESSENTIALS	17
Clinical Documentation Elements	18
Reframing Common Documentation Shortcuts	19
4. TREATMENT AND REFERRAL QUICK GUIDE	20
Therapy Escalation Criteria	21
AASLD/CDC/USPSTF Aligned Recommendations	22
Non-Pharmacologic Treatment and Lifestyle Modification.....	24
Medication Safety and Key Interactions	25
When to Refer	26
Follow-Up Timing	27
Comorbidity Management.....	28
Cost-Smart Options	29
Quality Metrics Tie-In	31
5. CODING REMINDERS AND CASE EXAMPLES	36
Coding Specificity	36
Annual Clinical Review and Confirmation	37
Good Documentation is Comprehensive Coding	38
EHR Workflow Tips	38
Brief Case Examples	39
REFERENCES	40

1 CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Definition: Chronic hepatitis is sustained hepatic inflammation persisting ≥ 6 months, driven by five principal etiologies in primary care: **chronic viral hepatitis B (HBV)**, **chronic viral hepatitis C (HCV)**, **metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH)**, the inflammatory phenotype of MASLD), **autoimmune hepatitis (AIH)**, and **alcohol-related or drug/toxin-induced** chronic hepatitis.¹⁻⁵ Regardless of etiology, **unresolved inflammation** drives progressive **fibrosis** toward **cirrhosis**, **portal hypertension**, **decompensation**, and **hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)**.⁶⁻¹⁰

ICD-10 Codes

HBV **B18.1 (without delta)**; most common HBV code) and **B18.0 (with delta)**/HDV co-infection); HCV **B18.2 (most common HCV code)**, genotype specified when known); **K70.1** (chronic alcoholic hepatitis); **K71.x** (chronic drug/toxin-induced; **specify causative agent**); **K75.4** (autoimmune hepatitis); **K75.3** (granulomatous hepatitis, NEC); **K73.9** (chronic hepatitis unspecified; reserved **ONLY** when extensive evaluation has **not established etiology**). **Avoid B19.x (unspecified viral hepatitis)** and **Z87.39** ('history of hepatitis') for active chronic hepatitis disease states.

Prevalence and Burden: Chronic liver disease **disproportionately affects older adults**. **MASLD** is the most prevalent etiology, with peak incidence at ages **61-65** and MASLD-related cirrhosis the leading transplant indication for adults over 65; projected MASLD case counts in those ≥ 80 years will **increase 300% by 2050**.^{11,12} The **1945-1965 birth cohort** carries a **sixfold higher** HCV prevalence than other age groups and accounts for **~75%** of US HCV infections and HCV-related mortality; an estimated **2.4 million adults** have chronic HBV, with approximately **two-thirds undiagnosed**.¹³⁻¹⁵ Alcohol-associated liver disease prevalence and mortality are rising in older adults, with **15%** of adults aged **60-94** consuming alcohol at **misuse levels** and the greatest increases in binge drinking occurring in those **over 50**.^{12,16} AIH incidence is highest in adults **over 65 (3.59/100,000 person-years)**, with a 3:1 female predominance and frequent presentation with advanced fibrosis.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ Drug-induced liver injury risk **rises with age due to polypharmacy**, with **32%** of DILI events reported in adults ≥ 65 .^{20,21} Cirrhosis prevalence among Medicare Advantage enrollees reached **1.67%** in 2018, **more than double** the commercially insured rate, increasing **8.1%** year-over-year.^{22,23}

HCC/RAF V28 Mapping

ICD-10 CODE(S) ²⁴	HCC CATEGORY (V28) ²⁵	RAF (CNA) ^{*26}	DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT ²⁴
B18.1 (HBV without delta) B18.0 (HBV with delta/HDV)	HCC 65 Chronic Hepatitis	0.185	Chronic HBV; document: HBsAg positivity ≥ 6 months confirming chronicity; HBV DNA level and HBeAg/anti-HBe status; treatment phase (immune-tolerant vs. immune-active); annual MEAT required; HDV co-infection must be documented separately when B18.0 applies

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