



interRAI Home Care CIHI Coding Reference Guide

2024



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Introduction

The *CIHI Coding Reference Guide for the interRAI Home Care* was developed by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). This guide highlights items from the interRAI HC © (version 9.1.4) that may require clarification, thereby assisting assessors to complete the more challenging items of the assessment.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist assessors in completing the interRAI HC assessment by highlighting some of its potentially challenging coding areas. It is intended to function as a companion guide for assessors completing the interRAI HC, to be used in conjunction with clinical judgment, expertise and relevant best practice guidelines.

Additional resources

The *interRAI HC User's Manual* remains the comprehensive resource to guide the understanding and documentation of assessment findings. In addition, resources are available to assessors to assist with accurate coding of the assessment:

eQuery: eQuery is a web-based application that stakeholders can use when they have a question about assessment-related topics. Search a repository of previously submitted questions and answers, or submit new questions if you're unable to find answers to specific coding questions.

Job aids: Several job aids specific to the interRAI HC provide further information to assessors. These job aids can be accessed through eQuery.

CIHI tips by assessment section

Section A Identification Information

Item	CIHI tip
A7i — Canadian resident, self-pay	In situations where the person provides a co-payment to top off home care services that are arranged and provided through the provincial home care program, code 1 (yes).
A8 — Reason for Assessment	The first assessment or initial assessment is done when the person enters the home care system or when they are screened for eligibility for home care/home health services. This assessment should be completed within 7 days after the person has been deemed eligible.
	Evidence indicates that a person receiving long-term home care services may go through clinically meaningful changes within 6 months. To capture changes, it is recommended that routine assessments be scheduled every 6 months, and no more than every 12 months, to ensure the care plan is appropriate and current.
	Assessors should prioritize both the initial and routine assessments according to the person's needs. If an interRAI Contact Assessment (interRAI CA) was completed prior to the interRAI HC, the Assessment Urgency Algorithm derived from the interRAI CA can be used to determine the relative urgency of completing an initial assessment.
	Code 4 (significant change in status reassessment) is defined as a change that is not self-limited, that affects the person's health status and that requires review or revision of the care plan to ensure that appropriate care is given. A major change can be an improvement or deterioration in the person's status.
	Assessments coded as 7 (other) are not submitted to the Integrated interRAI Reporting System (IRRS).
A9 — Assessment Reference Date	The Assessment Reference Date establishes a common period of observation as a reference point for each completed assessment. All information gathered about the person pertains to the 3-day observation period prior to and including the Assessment Reference Date.
	Home care assessments are usually completed during a single visit. If an assessment carries over to a second visit, information for the remaining assessment items must be for the time period established by the original Assessment Reference Date.
A14 — Living Arrangement	The code 1 (alone) in A14a — Lives pertains to a person who is living in a private home or apartment with no other individuals and is not in a congregate setting. If they need help, there is no one to assist.
	If the person is living in a congregate setting (e.g., assisted living, board and care, residential care facility, retirement residence/home), code 8 (with non-relatives). In a congregate living setting, if the person needs help there is a call bell, phone number, person or agency to call for support.

Section B Intake and Initial History

Item	CIHI tip
B — Intake and Initial History	Although this information is not likely to change during the person's involvement with the service, it can be updated if required.
B3 — Primary Language	For a person who is severely cognitively impaired or has limited language skills, code for the language they are exposed to in their place of residence.

Section C Cognition

Item	CIHI tip
C1 — Cognitive Skills for Daily Decision Making	Coma is a state of deep unarousable unconsciousness. A comatose person is in a state of deep and usually prolonged unconsciousness; they are unable to respond to external stimuli, such as pain. The comatose person does not open their eyes, does not speak and does not move their extremities on command. A persistent vegetative state may follow a coma and is characterized by wakefulness with no evidence of awareness.
C2a — Short-term memory OK	The person must be able to remember all 3 items after 5 minutes to code C2a as 0 (yes, memory OK). If the person can remember only 1 or 2 of the items, code 1 (memory problem).
C5 — Change in Decision Making as Compared to 90 Days Ago	Compare the decision-making ability of 90 days ago with the decision-making ability at the time of assessment. Note: If there was a change in the person's ability to make decisions at a given time during the past 90 days but their status at the time of assessment has returned to what it was 90 days ago, code 0 (no).

Section D Communication and Vision

Item	CIHI tip
D1 — Making Self Understood	This item includes the person's ability to express or communicate requests, needs, opinions, urgent problems and social conversation, whether in speech, writing, sign language or a combination of these (including the use of a word board or keyboard). This item is not intended to address differences in language understanding (e.g., a Russian speaker in an English-language facility) or difficulties with speech (e.g., slurring words that may make expression unclear).
D2 — Ability to Understand Others	This item involves the person's ability to understand others in any manner. It includes the use of a hearing appliance, if needed. This item does not test whether the problem is in understanding a particular language, such as when the individual's first language is different from that normally used by others.
D3 — Hearing	If the person regularly uses a hearing aid or other assistive listening device and indicates that they hear adequately, code 0 (adequate).
D4 — Vision	If the person regularly uses visual appliances (e.g., glasses) and indicates that they see adequately, code 0 (adequate).

Item	CIHI tip
E1 — Indicators of Possible Depressed, Anxious or Sad Mood	This item is not restricted to persons who have suicidal thoughts or verbalizations. Persistent expressions or feelings of sadness or depression, regardless of the severity, should be captured in this item. Do not include transient minor fluctuations in mood state (e.g., expressions of sadness after watching a movie).
E1b — Persistent anger with self or others	Persistent anger may be exhibited by verbal statements and non-verbal expressions of anger.
E1i — Withdrawal from activities of interest	If the person cannot participate in activities of interest due to illness or physical limitations but has not lost interest in being involved in activities with family and friends, code 0 (not present).
E1j — Reduced social interactions	If the person has always preferred to be on their own or usually has no social contacts with others, code 0 (not present). This item captures a reduction in the person's usual interactions only.
E2 — Self-Reported Mood	This item should be treated strictly as a self-report measure. Do not code based on your own inferences nor on ratings given by family, friends or other informants.
	If the person is unable or refuses to answer, code 8 (person could not (would not) respond).
E3a — Wandering	There is a difference between wandering, exit-seeking behaviour and elopement attempts. For example, persons who have a rational purpose in their exit-seeking behaviour and/or elopement attempts do not necessarily meet the definition of wandering.
E3c — Physical abuse	If the person strikes out with the intent to make physical contact with the targeted individual but does not make physical contact (e.g., because the targeted individual moves out of the line of contact), this is considered physical abuse.
E3d — Socially inappropriate/ disruptive behaviour symptoms	Socially inappropriate or disruptive behaviours may include pacing, if it is disruptive or distressing to others.
E3f — Resists care	Resisting care does not include a situation where a person has made an informed decision to refuse treatment.

Section E Mood and Behaviour

Section F	Psychosocial	Well-Being
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Item	CIHI tip
F1d — Conflict or anger with family or friends	This item refers to the person's actual expression of conflict or anger, verbally or in writing, even if family/friends don't report conflict.
F1e — Fearful of a family member or close acquaintance	Applies to the person's informal caregivers only. It is not necessary to establish the reason for the fear, only to determine whether it is present.
F4 — Length of Time Alone During the Day (Morning and Afternoon)	This item captures face-to-face interactions only. It excludes telephone calls, video calls and the company of pets. Capture the amount of time the person is literally alone, without any other person in the home.

Section G Functional Status

ltem	CIHI tip
G1a — Meal preparation	Administration of tube feedings and total parenteral nutrition (TPN) is not considered in G1a. The person's ability to manage their tube feeding/TPN is assessed in G2j — Eating.
G1b — Ordinary Housework	Moving furniture or other weight-bearing activity is not included in this item. Sweeping or wiping the floor with a light mop (not vigorous scrubbing) is included.
G1d — Managing medications	If medications are prepared in blister packs and the person manages the medications independently without any difficulty, code 0 (independent) for the following: G1dC — Managing medications — Capacity G1dP — Managing medications — Self-performance
G1e — Phone use	Texting is excluded when determining how G1e — Phone use is coded.
G1f — Stairs	The definition for this item includes ascending or descending the stairs, with rests within the flight if needed. It excludes half or partial flights, and managing stairs only with a lift/elevator.
	If the person is carried up/down a full flight of stairs, or if they use a chair lift, code 8 (activity did not occur) for self-performance and 6 (total dependence) for capacity.
	If the person crawls or uses their buttocks to climb or descend stairs independently, code 0 (independent).
G1g — Shopping	This item excludes online or telephone shopping. This item captures the person's self-performance and capacity for in-store purchases only. Transportation to the store is not captured in this item.
G1h — Transportation	This item captures the person's self-performance and capacity using any mode of transportation between locations. This includes the use of public transportation, bicycle (motorized or not) and taxi service. It excludes putting on a seatbelt, placing aids or equipment into the vehicle, and receiving assistance when provided by transportation companies as part of their organizational policies.

Item	CIHI tip
G2a — Bathing	If the person uses a bathing method other than a full tub bath or shower, the assessor should consider whether the bath achieved a similar degree of cleanliness as a tub bath or shower. If the same amount of cleanliness was met, then the assistance provided for the other method can be included.
G2f — Locomotion	Locomotion captures any method used to move between locations on the same floor (e.g., walking, wheelchair, crawling).
G2g — Transfer toilet	Unsafe transfers completed by the person are still captured as independent unless the person is provided with assistance during the unsafe transfer.
G2h — Toilet use	This item does not include getting to and from the bathroom or transferring on and off the toilet.
	Emptying a commode, bedpan or urinal is not considered a subtask in G2h.
G2i — Bed mobility	Bed mobility excludes lifting the legs in and out of bed to and from a sitting position.
G2j — Eating	Swallowing and chewing food are not considered subtasks in G2j. This item captures the person's self-performance in intake of nourishment. For example, how does the person pour, unwrap, cut, scoop and spear their food? How does the person use utensils or their fingers when necessary? Does the person prepare their tube feed or TPN?
G3b — Timed 4-metre (13-foot) walk	This item excludes any hands-on support when walking.
G3c — Distance walked	The intent of this item is to capture the person's independence in walking around the home or in the community. "Support as needed" refers both to assistive devices and to non-weight-bearing support from a caregiver (e.g., supervision, guided manoeuvring) that may be needed for the person to walk.
G3d — Distance wheeled self	If the person was wheeled by others, code 0 (wheeled by others). If the person did not wheel themselves but used a motorized wheelchair or scooter, code 1 (used motorized wheelchair/scooter). If the person wheeled themselves, code in the range of 2 (wheeled self less than 5 metres) to 5 (wheeled self 100+ metres) based on the distance they wheeled themselves. Codes 2 to 5 would also be correct if both manual and motorized wheelchairs were used in the same observation period.
G7 — Driving	This item pertains to licensed vehicles only. It excludes bicycles and mobility scooters. While these are technically vehicles, the intent of this item is to determine whether the person can drive their car or other licensed vehicle safely and thus remain independent around the community.

Section H Continence

Item	CIHI tip
H1 — Bladder Continence and H3 — Bowel Continence	A catheter or ostomy that has leaked in the last 3 days would be coded in the range of 2 (infrequently incontinent) to 5 (incontinent), depending on how frequently leakage occurred.
H2 — Urinary Collection Device	This item excludes intermittent catheterization devices. Female external catheters are included.
H4 — Pads or Briefs Worn	Do not include the routine use of pads on beds (or chairs) when the person is never or rarely incontinent.

Item	CIHI tip
I1 — Diseases	Code 3 (diagnosis present, monitored but no active treatment) includes any diagnosis with intermittent symptoms that are not managed by medication (e.g., migraines, cataracts).
l1e — Hemiplegia	Hemiparesis on its own is not captured in I1e.
I1s — Urinary tract infection in last 30 days	This item is not necessarily coded if the person is receiving prophylactic antibiotics for chronic urinary tract infections (UTIs). Code I1s only if a positive infection is reported in a laboratory result within this time.
12 — Other Disease Diagnoses	This item should be used both to capture diagnoses not listed in 11 — Diseases and to record a more specific diagnosis that has already been coded in 11. For example, if diabetes is coded in 11 and the assessor also wants to specify the type, this would be captured as an ICD-10-CA code in I2. Reasonable decision-making on the part of the assessor is expected to determine which diseases should be captured more specifically in I2.

Section I Disease Diagnoses

Section J Health Conditions

Item	CIHI tip
J1 — Falls	An intercepted fall — where the person is caught before falling to a lower surface — is not considered a fall. To be considered a fall, the person must unintentionally end up on a lower level or the ground. This item includes falls that occur while the person is being assisted by others.
J2a — Difficult or unable to move self to standing position unassisted	If the person used a hoist independently to get to a standing position in the last 3 days, code 0 (not present). If they required the assistance of another person to hoist to a standing position daily in the last 3 days, code 4 (exhibited daily in the last 3 days). A person who cannot stand and cannot be assessed for item J2a would be captured as 4 (exhibited daily in last 3 days).
J2d — Unsteady gait	A person who cannot weight bear and cannot be assessed for J2d would be captured as 0 (not present).
J4 — Fatigue	Use observation or discussion with the person or others to explore how the person's energy levels impact their daily schedule. Explore both physical and mental fatigue. Physical tiredness results in reduced energy, whereas mental or cognitive tiredness may result in reduced concentration and mental restlessness.
J5a — Frequency with which person complains or shows evidence of pain	If the person does not experience any pain because they are on a medication regimen that renders them pain free, code 0 (no pain).
J6b — Experiencing an acute episode or a flare-up of a recurrent or chronic problem	Examples of conditions for which the person may experience a flare-up include multiple sclerosis (MS), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and rheumatoid arthritis.
J8a — Smokes tobacco daily	This item excludes vaping with nicotine, chewing tobacco and occasional smoking.

Item	CIHI tip
K2 — Nutritional Issues	If the person has a feeding tube and is NPO (nil per os) or is on a prescribed fluid restriction (due to a pre-existing condition), code the following as 0 (no): • K2b — Dehydrated or BUN/creatinine ratio >20
	• K2c — Fluid intake less than 1,000 ml per day (or less than four 8 oz cups per day)
	• K2d — Fluid output exceeds input
	• K2e — Decrease in amount of food or fluid usually consumed
	• K2f — Ate one or fewer meals on at least 2 of last 3 days
K3 — Mode of Nutritional Intake	If the person has a swallowing problem but they have not modified their diet, code 0 (normal — person swallows all types of foods). Subcutaneous fluids and dextrose are not included in parenteral feeding.

Section K Oral and Nutritional Status

Section L Skin Condition

Item	CIHI tip
L7 — Foot Problems	A complete or partial foot amputation would be considered a structural problem and included in L7.

Section M Medications

Item	CIHI tip
M1 — List of All Medications	Long-acting medications given outside of the 3-day observation period are included in M1 and M4 (e.g., Haldol LA, chemotherapeutic agents).
(Optional) and M4 — Total Number of	Vaccinations are included only if they are provided within the 3-day observation period.
Medications	Legal cannabis products in any form are counted in M1 and M4. Exclude illicit or illegal synthetic cannabinoids (e.g., bath salts).
	Injectable vitamins such as vitamin B1, vitamin B6, vitamin B12 and vitamin C are included.
	Prescription-required oral vitamins such as vitamin D2, vitamin D3, calcitriol and a combination of vitamin A and vitamin E are included.
M5 — Total Number of Herbal/Nutritional	Minerals, vitamins, herbs, meal supplements, sports nutrition products and natural food supplements are included in M5.
Supplements	Non-prescribed over-the-counter oral vitamins are included in M5. Do not include prescription-required oral vitamins included in M4.
	Cannabis products are not captured in M5.

ltem	CIHI tip
M8 — Receipt of Psychotropic Medication	Medications are coded according to their pharmacological classification, not their use. For example, if a psychotropic medication is classified as an antipsychotic/ neuroleptic but is used for depression, it would still be classified as an antipsychotic/ neuroleptic medication.
	Cannabis products are classified as analgesics; they are therefore not captured in M8.

Section N Treatments and Procedures

Item	CIHI tip
N2a — Chemotherapy	The intent of N2a is to identify persons who are receiving chemotherapy to treat cancer only. This includes adjuvant therapies (e.g., tamoxifen) and other hormonal therapies (e.g., Herceptin). N2a excludes chemotherapy agents used to treat any other disease (e.g., Megace as an appetite stimulant, methotrexate to treat rheumatoid arthritis).
N2d — IV medication	IV medications administered prior to admission or solely during a surgical procedure and in the immediate post-operative period (e.g., in a recovery room) are not captured in N2d.
	Medications administered by subcutaneous infusion, epidural, intrathecal, CADD pump and/or baclofen pump are included and captured in N2d.
N2j — Ventilator or respirator	The use of a ventilator or respirator must be overseen by a qualified professional such as a respiratory therapist. It can also include ongoing use of a ventilator or respirator as long as the treatment was set up and is periodically monitored by a qualified professional.
	The use of CPAP and BiPAP is not captured in this item. N2j is intended to capture the needs of persons who are ventilator/respirator dependent, specifically persons with an endotracheal tube or tracheostomy tube in place (i.e., invasive ventilation).
N2k — Wound care	Assessors may capture care provided by an informal caregiver (or self-care) only when the treatment plan is recommended by a formal caregiver and ongoing supervision and reassessment of the wound continues to be part of the care plan.
	Care provided to a PEG tube site or ostomy site may be captured here. If the site is from a recent surgical procedure, capture it in L4 — Major Skin Problems.
N2I — Scheduled toileting program	A scheduled toileting program aims to improve the person's bladder and/or bowel continence.
	The following are not considered a scheduled toileting program: • Provision of incontinence care
	Changing of pads and/or linens on a regular schedule
	Intermittent catheterization
	Disimpactment

Item	CIHI tip
N3 — Formal Care	This item excludes care that is provided without charge. Because the names used to describe home- and community-based services often differ by jurisdiction, the assessor should seek clarification from agency leadership about how to code care that is excluded from this list.
	 If a friend/neighbour or family member is providing care, to be considered "formal" the service must meet the professional qualifications necessary for providing the activity/service: There must be a formalized understanding between the care provider and the parameters and duration of the convices that will be provided
	person regarding the nature and duration of the services that will be provided.The care provider must be paid at competitive rates.
	 The expectations of the care provider are the same as if they were with a formal agency.
	If services are provided by multiple formal caregivers, divide the time between the disciplines. For example, if an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist both visit the person for 1 hour, code each as 30 minutes.
	Volunteer hours are not captured in this item.
	Services provided by therapy assistants may be included if the assistant is under the direct supervision of a qualified and registered therapist.
	Personal support services, nursing visits and homemaking services provided by assisted-living staff to a client in an assisted-living environment or a retirement residence can be captured in N3a — Home health aide, N3b — Home nurse and N3c — Homemaking services.
N3d — Meals	Only days are captured for this item, not minutes.
	If the person has prepared meals delivered (e.g., Uber, Meals on Wheels), count only the number of days the meals were received.
	In congregate living settings, capture only prepared meals delivered to the person's room, not meals served in the main dining room.
N3h — Psychological therapy	Exclude time spent by a social worker counselling family members/significant others of the person (e.g., who may be cognitively impaired). Count only time spent providing counselling directly to the person.
	If a chaplain has credentials in counselling through a recognized organization such as the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care, pastoral counselling can be included as a form of psychotherapy.
N4a — In-patient acute hospital with overnight stay	This item does not include admissions for day surgery or other outpatient services.
N4b — Emergency room visit	Exclude any emergency department visits that resulted in a hospital admission as well as visits that were scheduled or pre-arranged.

Item	CIHI tip
N4c — Physician visit	This item includes a visit to the medical provider's office or clinic by the person, or a medical provider's visit to the person's home. Virtual and phone visits can be counted under this item as long as they pertain to a clinical event and involve medical direction/management.
	The following providers can be included in this item: osteopath, podiatrist, optometrist, opthhalmologist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dentist, dental surgeon, any consultant (e.g., cardiologist) and naturopathic physician/doctor of naturopathic medicine.
	Exclude the following providers: chiropodist, orthotist/pedorthist, chiropractor, optician, denturist, psychologist and clinical nurse specialist.
N5 — Physically Restrained	A physical restraint is defined as any manual method, or any physical or mechanical device, material or equipment, that is attached or adjacent to the person's body; that the person cannot remove easily; and that does or has the potential to restrict the person's freedom of movement or normal access to their body. Exception: If the person has no voluntary movement (i.e., is comatose or is quadriplegic), code 0 (not used).

Section O Responsibility

Item	CIHI tip
Not applicable	Currently, there are no coding tips for this section.

Section P Social Supports

Item	CIHI tip
Not applicable	Currently, there are no coding tips for this section.

Section Q Environmental Assessment

Item	CIHI tip
Q4 — Finances	If the person has insufficient funds to purchase necessities, code 1 (yes) regardless
	of how they use their available resources.

Section R Discharge Potential and Overall Status

Item	CIHI tip
R6 — Client Group	The person is assigned to a client group based on their needs and health status, not on the services available. Only 1 client group can be assigned at a time, and the End-of-Life group takes precedence over other categories.

Section S Discharge

Item	CIHI tip
Not applicable	Currently, there are no coding tips for this section.

Section T Assessment Information

Item	CIHI tip
T1 — Signature of Person Coordinating/ Completing the Assessment	interRAI has no official requirements regarding the professional designation or educational requirements of the assessor/assessment coordinator. However, it is important to consider additional training that the individual may require to support development of the assessment skills necessary to complete the clinician-led tool.
	CIHI recommends that an assessment be completed and/or that the role of assessment coordinator be assumed by a regulated health care professional who would have otherwise carried out an equivalent process (assessment, problem identification/ verification, collaborative goal setting, intervention and evaluation) based on their education/experience, and who has the appropriate training on the assessment tool. Each province/territory can determine its professional/educational requirements
	Each province/territory can determine its professional/educational requirements for completing an interRAI assessment.



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