

FROM THE PRESENTING PROBLEM TO THE CODE

The table shows how E/M codes can be based on the presenting problem. Background colors indicate where the same requirements for decision making, history or physical are found in multiple codes, and red text is used to emphasize where a 9920x code differs from the 9921x code to its left.

<p>99215 40 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or more chronic illnesses with severe exacerbation, progression or side effects of treatment • Acute or chronic illnesses or injuries posing threat to life or function (MI, pulmonary embolism, respiratory distress) • Abrupt neurologic status change (TIA, seizure, weakness, sensory loss) <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">OR</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each*</td> <td></td> <td>Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)</td> </tr> </table>	History	OR	Physical	HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each*		Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)	<p>99205 60 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or more chronic illnesses with severe exacerbation, progression or side effects of treatment • Acute or chronic illnesses or injuries posing threat to life or function (MI, pulmonary embolism, respiratory distress) • Abrupt neurologic status change (TIA, seizure, weakness, sensory loss) <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">AND</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each</td> <td></td> <td>Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)</td> </tr> </table>	History	AND	Physical	HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each		Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)
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<p>99214 25 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 chronic stable illnesses • 2+ or more chronic stable illnesses (2 chronic + 1 minor) • 1+ or more chronic illnesses with exacerbation (chronic + minor) • Undiagnosed new problem with uncertain diagnosis • Acute illness with systemic symptoms • Acute complicated injury <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">OR</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 4 elements ROS: 2-9 systems PFSH: 1 of 3</td> <td></td> <td>Detailed (affected area and related organ system)</td> </tr> </table>	History	OR	Physical	HPI: 4 elements ROS: 2-9 systems PFSH: 1 of 3		Detailed (affected area and related organ system)	<p>99204 45 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 chronic stable illnesses • 2+ or more chronic stable illnesses (2 chronic + 1 minor) • 1+ or more chronic illnesses with exacerbation (chronic + minor) • Undiagnosed new problem with uncertain diagnosis • Acute illness with systemic symptoms • Acute complicated injury <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">AND</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each</td> <td></td> <td>Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)</td> </tr> </table>	History	AND	Physical	HPI: 4 elements ROS: 10 systems PFSH: 1 of each		Comprehensive (general multisystem or complete single organ system)
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<p>99213 15 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or more self-limited problems • 1 stable chronic illness • Acute uncomplicated illness (cystitis, sprain) <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">OR</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 1-3 elements ROS: Pertinent</td> <td></td> <td>Expanded problem focused</td> </tr> </table>	History	OR	Physical	HPI: 1-3 elements ROS: Pertinent		Expanded problem focused	<p>99203 30 minutes</p> <p>Decision Making (presenting problem)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 or more self-limited problems • 1 stable chronic illness • Acute uncomplicated illness (cystitis, sprain) <p>AND ...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">History</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">AND</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Physical</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HPI: 4 elements ROS: 2-9 systems PFSH: 1 of 3</td> <td></td> <td>Detailed (affected area and related organ system)</td> </tr> </table>	History	AND	Physical	HPI: 4 elements ROS: 2-9 systems PFSH: 1 of 3		Detailed (affected area and related organ system)
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* The guidelines require documenting only 2 PFSH elements, but since this is the only difference between the history requirements for 99215 and 99205, we're opting for ease of memorization.

Key: HPI: History of present illness; PFSH: Past, family and social history; ROS: Review of systems



FPM Toolbox To find more practice resources, visit <https://www.aafp.org/fpm/toolbox>.

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