KYPHOSIS refers to an excessive, forward rounding of the back. The article lists the causes, symptoms, treatment and diagnosis codes for the condition.
Kyphosis is a spinal disorder that involves an excessive outward curvature of the spine that results in an abnormal, forward rounding of the upper back. This excessive curvature can cause a hunched or slouching appearance that is commonly referred to as hunchback or roundback. The condition generally affects the thoracic spine and sometimes the cervical spine. It can occur at any age but is most common in older women. The spinal disorder can cause back pain, muscle fatigue, and stiffness on the mild side of the spectrum. In severe cases, the condition can be painful and cause significant deformity and also lead to breathing problems. Kyphosis treatment depends on the cause and severity of your condition. Initial treatment modalities include – pain relieving medications, exercises and bracing. However, patients with severe kyphosis may need surgery that helps reduce the excessive spinal curve and improve symptoms. With appropriate and timely treatment, the severity of symptoms can be controlled to a great extent. However, with the increasing body of regulations, reporting orthopedics diagnoses and treatment has become complex. Outsourcing medical billing and coding services helps providers ensure accurate reporting of services rendered for appropriate reimbursement.

Kyphosis normally occurs when the vertebrae in the upper back become more wedge shaped. Abnormal shape of vertebrae can occur due to birth defects, disk degeneration, fractures, Scheuermann's disease, osteoporosis, neuromuscular conditions, cancer and cancer treatments and other syndromes. The normal spine can bend from 20 to 45 degrees of curvature in the upper back area in this spinal condition.
Types of Kyphosis

The three types of kyphosis that most commonly affects children and adolescents include -

- **Postural Kyphosis** – As the name suggests, this is one of the most common forms of kyphosis caused by poor posture. The curve caused this condition is typically round and smooth and can often be corrected by the patient when he or she is asked to "stand up straight." The spinal condition is more common in girls than boys and is rarely painful as the curve does not progress.

- **Scheuermann’s Kyphosis** – Caused by a structural abnormality in the spine, this spinal condition becomes apparent during the teen years. It can result in a significantly more severe deformity than postural kyphosis, specifically in thin patients.

- **Congenital Kyphosis** – One of the rarest forms, congenital kyphosis occurs due to abnormal development of the vertebrae before birth and can cause the vertebrae to fuse together. The condition typically worsens as the child ages and will often require surgical treatment at a very young age to stop progression of the curve.

How Do You Know If You Have Kyphosis?

Most people experience symptoms of kyphosis differently. The signs and symptoms of this condition vary, depending on the typical causes and severity of curves. Common symptoms include -

- Rounded shoulders
- A visible hump on the back
• Mild back pain
• Fatigue
• Loss of sensation
• Spine tenderness and/or stiffness
• Tight hamstrings (the muscles in the back of the thigh)
• Weakness, numbness, or tingling in the legs
• Shortness of breath or other breathing difficulties
• Difference in shoulder height
• The head bends forward compared to the rest of the body

In addition to causing back pain, the spinal curvature disorder may cause several additional complications such as – breathing trouble, digestive problems, limited physical functions and body image problems.

**Diagnosing and Treating Kyphosis**

Initial diagnosis of kyphosis will begin with a detailed physical examination. Physicians will conduct a thorough evaluation of previous medical history, enquire about your symptoms and also check your height. You may be asked to bend forward from the waist in order to view your spine from the side. A detailed neurological exam to check your reflexes and muscle strength will also be done. After thorough evaluation of your signs and symptoms, your physician may recommend several diagnostic imaging tests such as – X-rays, CT scan, MRI scan, nerve tests and bone density tests.

Treatment modalities for this condition may mainly depend on the type of kyphosis, its symptoms and the severity of curves. Treatment options include medications like - Pain relievers (such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) or naproxen sodium (Aleve) and other
osteoporosis bone strengthening medications. Physical therapy stretching exercises will help improve spinal flexibility and relieve back pain. Wearing a body brace will also help reduce the symptoms of the condition. Surgery will be recommended as a last resort for severe kyphosis that is pinching the spinal cord or nerve roots. Spinal fusion is the most common procedure for reducing the degree of curvature.

**Orthopedics medical coding** involves the use of specific ICD-10 diagnosis codes to report kyphosis on the medical claims providers submit to health insurers for reimbursement. ICD-10 Codes to use for “Kyphosis” include –

- **M40 - Kyphosis and lordosis**
- **M40.0 - Postural kyphosis**
  - M40.00 - Postural kyphosis, site unspecified
  - M40.03 - Postural kyphosis, cervicothoracic region
  - M40.04 - Postural kyphosis, thoracic region
  - M40.05 - Postural kyphosis, thoracolumbar region
- **M40.1 - Other secondary kyphosis**
  - M40.10 - Other secondary kyphosis, site unspecified
  - M40.12 - Other secondary kyphosis, cervical region
  - M40.13 - Other secondary kyphosis, cervicothoracic region
  - M40.14 - Other secondary kyphosis, thoracic region
  - M40.15 - Other secondary kyphosis, thoracolumbar region
- **M40.2 - Other and unspecified kyphosis**
  - M40.20 - Unspecified kyphosis
    - M40.202 - Unspecified kyphosis, cervical region
    - M40.203 - Unspecified kyphosis, cervicothoracic region
    - M40.204 - Unspecified kyphosis, thoracic region
    - M40.205 - Unspecified kyphosis, thoracolumbar region
- M40.209 - Unspecified kyphosis, site unspecified

✓ M40.29 - Other kyphosis
  - M40.292 - Other kyphosis, cervical region
  - M40.293 - Other kyphosis, cervicothoracic region
  - M40.294 - Other kyphosis, thoracic region
  - M40.295 - Other kyphosis, thoracolumbar region
  - M40.299 - Other kyphosis, site unspecified

- M40.3 - Flatback syndrome
  ✓ M40.30 - Flatback syndrome, site unspecified
  ✓ M40.35 - Flatback syndrome, thoracolumbar region
  ✓ M40.36 - Flatback syndrome, lumbar region
  ✓ M40.37 - Flatback syndrome, lumbosacral region

Unless the kyphosis is caused by poor postural habits, the onset cannot be prevented. However, early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent the condition from progressing and causing spinal deformity. If left untreated, curve progression could potentially lead to problems during adulthood. Patients with kyphosis need to conduct regular check-ups to monitor the condition and check the progression of the curve.

Medical coding for severe spinal disorders can be complex. By outsourcing these tasks to a reliable and established medical billing and coding company (that provides the services of AAPC-certified coding specialists), healthcare practices can ensure correct and timely medical billing and claims submission.