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DIAGNOSIS CODING TIP OF THE WEEK:

When determining a diagnosis code for a patient with cancer, do not use the codes for neoplasm of unspecified nature (239). These codes should be used only for a patient with a growth or mass that is “not otherwise specified”, for example if a patient has a current diagnosis of breast cancer use the code 174.9 for neoplasm, breast, unspecified. If there is a personal history of cancer the appropriate V code can be used, such as V10.3 for a personal history of breast cancer. If there is definitive cancer diagnoses use the code range 140-199 with the appropriate 4th or 5th digit to define the location.