



Employee Spotlight

December 2014



Ask the **Expert**



Bill M., CCS

HIM Consultant

After 30 years, I retired from the State of Florida in 2007, with my last 12 years in long-term care assessments.

I attended coding school for one year and then interned for a few months at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. I then began working there as an inpatient coder and stayed for five years.

I moved to Atlanta about a year and a half ago. I worked for Lexicode as a remote senior inpatient coder for about 6 months before moving on to On Assignment HIM as a travel coder. Now I work remotely from home.

When my wife died in 2004, I became a single parent to my daughter, who was nine at the time. She now attends Florida State University.

Go Green for the Holidays

By: CDC.gov National Center for Environmental Health

The winter holidays are nearly here! You may be ready for the festivities, or you may still be planning holiday gatherings and shopping for decorations and gifts. Most of us want to enjoy the fun and spirit of the season without spending too much money or using too many resources in the process. And most of all, we all want to enjoy quality time with those we love.

The good news is that you can participate in all these holiday activities and still manage to conserve resources. In doing so, you also protect the environment, and protecting the environment can safeguard your health both now and in the future.

Even if you already reduce, reuse, and recycle, browse through the suggestions below for more ways to bring those practices into your holiday activities. If all of us make even a few eco-friendly choices, we will save energy and resources and send less trash to the landfill during this busy time of year.

Decorate with items that are energy-efficient and durable

- Buy an artificial tree that you can use for years to come
- Use other types of decorations besides trees
- Contact your state cooperative extension service to find local trees or sustainably grown trees
- Buy a living tree you can plant outside or keep as a houseplant after the holidays
- Buy a smaller tree so that you have less to recycle
- Dispose of your tree at a chipping facility
- Consider using few or no lights in your holiday decorations
- Decorate with more energy-efficient LED strings

- Plug your decorative indoor and outdoor lights into a timer to save electricity
- Choose durable ornaments from wood, metal, or cloth

Save resources by giving cards that are eco-friendly

- Make your own cards
- Buy cards made from recycled paper and printed in non-toxic inks
- Buy cards wrapped in the least bulky or most recyclable packaging

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Hard As a...Rock?

You've heard of kidney stones, and gallstones, even the Rolling Stones, but have you ever heard of a tonsil stone? Believe it or not, these stones are more common than you think (aka tonsilloliths or tonsil calculi). They are painful, and can cause dysphagia and halitosis, but clinically are not more than an annoyance for most people. What are these stones and how are they treated? To find the answers, let's start at the beginning...

What are tonsils?

Tonsils are glandular tissue that sits in the back of the mouth on both sides. They are lymphocytic structures that play a big role in the immune system. They normally do a great job of catching bacteria that enter into the mouth and prevent them from going further into the body. They are one line of defense for the immune system, with multiple back-ups in place for possible invaders entering the body through the mouth (which is why people can live without them).

It's the structure of the tonsil that relates to the stone formation. Tonsils have nooks and crannies called crypts on them which are great for trapping bacteria and viruses. However, if that mixes with other debris and gets trapped, it solidifies—thus, forming calculi (or stones) which vary in size.

Removal

Most stones can be removed spontaneously with coughing, gargling vigorously with a salt solution, or by simply applying pressure to the area with the finger, a toothbrush or other instrument. One source recommends sucking on a lollipop. Surgical intervention may be required by either removal of the stones or tonsillectomy.

Prevention is tricky. Keeping the mouth clean is a start. Rinsing with salt solutions throughout the day will help to prevent the debris from settling in the crypts of the tonsils. Physicians may prescribe antibiotics to reduce the bacterial overload in the tonsils. Finally, when the tonsils are severely enlarged by such stones, surgical removal may be necessary.

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Employee of the Month

December 2014



Lynn Arnold, RHIT, CCS, CCS-P
Compliance Auditor

I started with On Assignment HIM in July 2014, but I have been involved in coding for over 30 years. I started my career by working with a contract coding company while I was still completing my associate degree internship. This choice led to working for that same company once I graduated. It provided me with a greater understanding of how coding was impacting the country (DRGs had just been implemented), the huge demand for qualified coders (which still is present), and the income potential. This has been a great career choice for me. I have done almost every kind of coding there is. I have also worked in multiple roles: coder, auditor, manager, and consultant. I love the variety of work and roles I have been able to do and truly enjoy all aspects of coding and other related revenue cycle functions.

As much as I like my work, I truly enjoy and value my personal time. I love to travel often and anywhere! A couple of my favorite places are Alaska and the Canadian Rocky Mountains. I enjoy theater, music, and reading. I also enjoy walking, biking, swimming, and boating. I have two creative hobbies that also keep me busy: jewelry making/bead weaving and stamping (greeting cards).

Ask the Expert *(Continued from page 1)*

Coding Corner

The following are some of the ICD-10-CM codes associated with a tonsilloliths diagnosis:

- Tonsil Calculi – J35.8 Other chronic diseases of tonsils and adenoids
- Sore Throat – J02.9 Acute pharyngitis, unspecified
- Difficulty Swallowing – R13.10 – Dysphagia, unspecified
- Bad Breath – R19.6 Halitosis
- Ear Pain
 - H92.01 Otalgia, right ear
 - H92.02 Otalgia, left ear
 - H92.03 Otalgia, bilateral

Treatment

Removal of the stone varies on the approach—whether it gets pulled with forceps (0CCPXZZ) or requires incision (0CCP0ZZ):

Section	0	Medical and Surgical
Body System	C	Mouth and Throat
Operation	C	Extirpation – <i>Taking or cutting out solid matter from a body part</i>

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
P Tonsils	0 Open X External	Z No Device	Z No Qualifier

(Continued on page 3)

What do you think?

Proposed ICD-10 Extension to 2017

As you've probably heard there is a group advocating to push the ICD-10 extension date until 2017, much to the disappointment for the new code set's supporters.

What do you think? Do you want to see a 2017 implementation date, or are you ready start using ICD-10 next year?

Please take our 5-question survey by clicking the link below, and we'll share the results in next month's issue.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ICD10extension>

Thank you for sharing your opinion with us.

More information regarding the proposed extension can be found in the Journal of AHIMA by clicking on this link to their recent article: <http://journal.ahima.org/2014/11/24/physician-groups-push-for-two-year-icd-10-delay-on-capitol-hill/>



Set the Record Straight

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December 2014



Main Article *(Continued from page 1)*

Use fewer resources when you shop, give presents, and wrap gifts

- Take your own bags on shopping trips (keep them in the car so they're always available)
- Give gifts that are durable, energy-efficient, recyclable, or made of natural products
- Search antique and second-hand stores for unique gifts
- Make your own gifts: knit, sew, bake, build, or create art from reused items
- Give a membership or an experience—tuition for a class or a visit to museum
- Give your time—coupons for providing a meal, planting a garden, cleaning, or using another talent or skill
- Use creative materials for gift wrap (such as): scarves, fabric, maps, sheet music, advertisements, reusable tins, usable baking pans, etc.
- Reuse the fronts of old holiday cards as gift tags

Eat sustainable food and avoid disposable containers and extra packaging

- Research sustainable food choices in your area and buy locally if possible
- Buy snacks and beverages in bulk to avoid extra packaging
- Serve food with washable utensils, plates, and glasses rather than disposable items

Why not choose a few of these ideas that will be easy for you to incorporate into your holiday celebration?

This article can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/greenholidays/index.html>

Ask the Expert *(Continued from page 2)*

Removal of the tonsil (OCTPXZZ):

Section 0 Medical and Surgical
Body System C Mouth and Throat

Operation T Resection – Cutting out or off, without replacement, all of a body part

Body Part	Approach	Device	Qualifier
P Tonsils	X External	Z No Device	Z No Qualifier

References:

<http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/tonsil-stones-tonsilloliths-treatment-and-prevention>
<http://www.findhomeremedy.com/natural-cure-for-tonsil-stones/>

Who Knows?

Scientists named this animal as being the oldest animal on record—it's age is actually counted by its rings. When it died it was 507 years old! Sadly, "Ming" died when frozen by scientists for transport.

November WHO KNOWS?

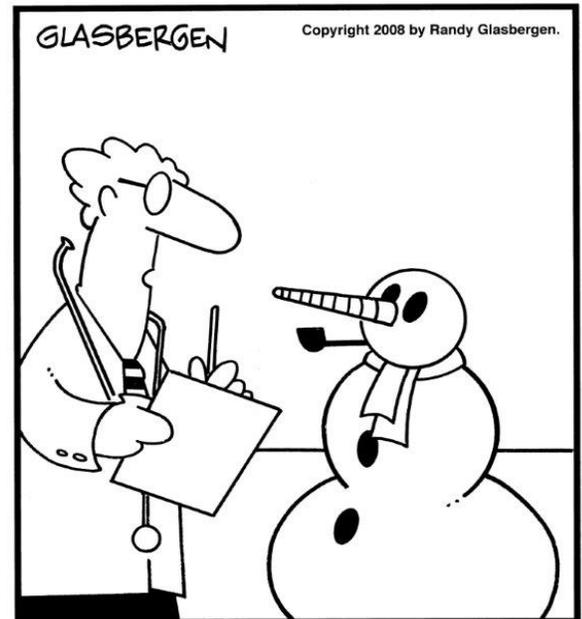
And the winner is... Lisa B.!

Answer: Hyperthymesia

Send your answers to:

Sarah_Pedersen@oxfordcorp.com

All correct answers will be put into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 gift card from On Assignment HIM!



"Lose some weight, quit smoking, move around more and eat the carrot."