In the ICD-10-CM code set, valid codes can be three characters (eg, I10) to seven characters (eg, T43.636A). Below, ICD-10-CM code T43.636A is dissected for further understanding of the new ICD-10-CM code format.

**ICD-10-CM code T43.636 requires a 7th character extension (A, D, or S).**

First character is always a letter (A-Z excluding U)  
The second and third characters may be letters or numbers  
The fourth through seventh characters can be any combination of letters (excluding U) or numbers

**Category**  
All categories are three characters.  
For this example, category T43 is poisoning by, adverse effect of and underdosing of psychotropic drugs, not elsewhere classified.

**Subcategories/Subdivision**  
Subcategories are indicated in the 4th and 5th character and identify anatomic site, severity, or other clinical data. The 6th character, or subdivision, provides another level of specificity.  
For this example, T43.6 is poisoning by, adverse effect of and underdosing of psychostimulants. T43.63 is poisoning by, adverse effect of and underdosing of methylphenidate. T43.636 is underdosing of methylphenidate.

**Extension**  
For this example, T43.636A is underdosing of methylphenidate, initial encounter.

ICD-10-CM uses the letter “X” as a placeholder for future expansion of a code when an alpha/numeric character is not an option without disturbing the coding structure. A single “X” placeholder can be used in the 4th, 5th, or 6th position as shown below, or multiple “X” placeholders can be used in two to three of the 4th, 5th, and 6th positions.

**ICD-10-CM code T56.0X1 requires a 5th character placeholder and a 7th character extension (A, D, or S).**

T 5 6 . 0 X 1 A

**ICD-10-CM code M1A.9 requires a 5th and 6th character placeholder and a 7th character extension (0 or 1).**

M 1 A . 9 X X 0

**ICD-10-CM code T66 requires a 4th, 5th, and 6th character placeholder and a 7th character extension (A, D, or S).**

T 6 6 . X X X A