



# Using the Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical Classification to Select the Correct CCI Pharmacological Agent — Tip for Coders

This Tip for Coders clarifies how to find the correct Canadian Classification of Health Interventions (CCI) pharmacological agent when the specific CCI pharmacological agent is not found in the classification.

Appendix D in CCI — Pharmacological, Biological and Other Agents: Table of Conversions for CCI Code Component to ATC Code — lists generic pharmacological agents with some examples. Advancements in medicine mean that new pharmacological agents are continuously being approved, and Appendix D cannot be updated at the same rate to align with what is currently approved for use.

If you cannot find a pharmacological agent in CCI, you may use the [Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical \(ATC\) classification](#) as a guide to identify the correct CCI pharmacological agent. Once you've located the ATC code, use Appendix D to map the ATC code to the correct CCI qualifier, per the note at rubric 1.ZZ.35.<sup>^^</sup> *Pharmacotherapy, total body.*

**Note:** The ATC drug classification was designed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is maintained by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Drugs and Statistics.

## Searching the WHO ATC classification

If the pharmacological agent is not listed in Appendix D of CCI, follow these steps to search the WHO ATC classification:

1. Go to the [WHO ATC website](#) and search for the generic (non-proprietary) name of the pharmacological agent. If necessary, use a credible resource such as the [Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties \(CPS\)](#) to identify the generic name. For example, search the WHO ATC website for trifluridine given to treat a malignant neoplasm.





## Tip for Coders

2. Review the search results and select the applicable pharmacological agent. This will depend on the organ or body system on which the pharmacological agent is acting and the therapeutic properties of the pharmacological agent. For example, trifluridine is classified to 2 ATC codes:
  - a. S01AD when it is administered as an ophthalmologic antiinfective, antiviral; and
  - b. L01BC when it is administered as an antineoplastic and immunomodulating agent, antimetabolite.

**Note:** When 2 pharmacological agents are administered and they are classified to a combination ATC code, use the combination ATC code instead of 2 separate ATC codes.

3. Go to Appendix D in CCI and locate the ATC code in the fourth column of the table. Read across the row to the first column to locate the CCI qualifier.

**Note:** The ATC codes in Appendix D are 3 to 5 characters long. Therefore, you need only the first 3 to 5 characters of the ATC code to map to the CCI qualifier. For example, ATC code L01BC is listed as L01B in Appendix D, which maps to CCI qualifier M2.

4. Determine the anatomy site (i.e., local by anatomy site, systemic — total body) and the route of administration of the pharmacological agent to assign the appropriate CCI code. For example, oral trifluridine given to treat a malignant neoplasm is classified to 1.ZZ.35.CA-M2 *Pharmacotherapy, total body, per orifice (oral) approach, antineoplastic and immunomodulating agents, using antimetabolite*.

If you are not sure how to classify a pharmacological agent, send a coding question via eQuery, along with a de-identified copy of the pertinent clinical documentation.



# Selecting a pharmacological agent in CCI

The following table provides examples of how to use the ATC classification to find the correct CCI code.

### Case 1

**A patient with severe ulcerative colitis has failed to achieve remission with regular therapy. During this visit, she is started on vedolizumab at 300 mg IV.**

ATC code: L04 Immunosuppressant

CCI qualifier: M8 Immunosuppressive agents

CCI code: 1.ZZ.35.HA-M8 *Pharmacotherapy, total body antineoplastic and immunomodulating agents percutaneous approach [intramuscular, intravenous, subcutaneous, intradermal] using immunosuppressive agent*

### Case 2

**A patient with known prostate cancer is admitted to the hospital due to ongoing pain. During this admission, he receives a 50 mg tablet of bicalutamide daily.**

ATC code: L02 Endocrine therapy

CCI qualifier: M6 Endocrine therapy

CCI code: 1.ZZ.35.CA-M6 *Pharmacotherapy, total body antineoplastic and immunomodulating agents per orifice (oral) approach using endocrine therapy*

### Case 3

**A patient is admitted to the hospital with an asthma attack. During this admission, the patient receives 50 mcg of mometasone via inhaler twice a day.**

ATC code: R03 Glucocorticoids

CCI qualifier: R3 Anti-asthmatics

CCI code: 1.GZ.35.CA-R3 *Pharmacotherapy (local), respiratory system NEC using antiasthmatic agent*



# Assess your understanding

Identify the ATC code, the CCI qualifier and the complete CCI code.

## Description of case

### Exercises

1. A patient with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) presents to the clinic for edaravone infusion.
2. A patient presents to the clinic for a Depo-Provera injection.
3. A patient presents to the clinic with eye inflammation caused by allergies. The patient receives 2 drops of loteprednol in each eye.

## Answers

1. ATC code: N07 Other nervous system drugs  
CCI qualifier: P9 Other nervous system drugs  
CCI code: 1.ZZ.35.HA-P9 *Pharmacotherapy, total body nervous system agents percutaneous approach [intramuscular, intravenous, subcutaneous, intradermal] using other nervous system drug*
2. ATC code: G03 Sex hormones and modulators of the genital system  
CCI qualifier: I5 Sex hormones and modulators of the genital system  
CCI code: 1.ZZ.35.HA-I5 *Pharmacotherapy, total body genitourinary system agents and sex hormones percutaneous approach [intramuscular, intravenous, subcutaneous, intradermal] using sex hormone and modulator of genital system*  
**Note:** The generic name of Depo-Provera is medroxyprogesterone.
3. ATC code: S01 Corticosteroids, plain  
CCI qualifier: Q5 Ophthalmological agents  
CCI code: 1.CZ.35.JA-Q5 *Pharmacotherapy (local), eye NEC of ophthalmologic agent NEC using external approach*

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