

Medicare Wellness Visits- Frequently Asked Questions

1) Does Medicare pay for a routine yearly physical?

No. Medicare does not pay for routine preventative physical exams.

2) What preventative medical visits does Medicare Cover?

Medicare pays for two wellness visits:

1) Welcome to Medicare Visit- Within the first 12 months you have Medicare Part B, Medicare covers the one-time *Welcome to Medicare Visit*. It includes a review of your medical and social history related to your health, and education and counseling about preventative services such as certain screenings, shots, and referrals for other care that is needed. This visit is a great way to get up-to-date with your doctor about how to stay healthy.

2) Annual Wellness Visit- You are eligible for your first *Annual Wellness Visit* if you have been enrolled in Medicare for more than 12 months and have not had a *Welcome to Medicare Visit* in the last 12 months.

An official government booklet called *Your Guide to Medicare's Preventative Services* explains in detail all of the preventative services Medicare covers and how often. It is available online:

<http://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10110.pdf>.

3) What happens during the *Welcome to Medicare Visit*?

- During the visit, your nurse will:
- Record your medical history
- Check your height, weight, and blood pressure
- Calculate your body mass index (BMI)
- Give you a simple vision test

Depending on your general health and medical history, further tests may be ordered. You will get advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health, and stay well. You will also get a written plan (like a checklist) letting you know which screenings and other preventative services you need. Your physician will answer questions at the end of the visit.

4) What should I bring to the *Welcome to Medicare Visit*?

Plan to bring the following items:

- A list of the current doctors and specialists you may see.
- A list of prescription and over the counter drugs that you currently take, how often you take them, and the doctor that prescribed them. (Bring all of your medications in their bottles at this appointment)

5) What should I know about the *Annual Wellness Visit*?

If you have had Medicare Part B for longer than 12 months, you can get this yearly wellness visit to develop or update a personalized prevention plan based on your current health and risk factors. This visit includes the following:

- Review of medical and family history
- A list of current providers and prescriptions
- Height, weight, blood pressure, and other routine measurements
- A screening schedule of appropriate preventative services
- A list of risk factors and treatment options for you

6) What should I bring to the *Annual Wellness Visit*?

Bring the same things listed above for the *Welcome to Medicare Visit*.

7) What is the difference between the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* and the *Annual Wellness Visit*?

Both visits are similar, however the main difference is timing. New enrollees in Medicare are eligible for the one-time *Welcome to Medicare Visit* to be provided only in the first 12 months of having Medicare. The *Annual Wellness Visit* can take place every 12 months and the first of which can be scheduled 12 months after the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* or 12 months after enrollment of Medicare part B.

8) How are the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* and *Annual Wellness Visit* different from a yearly physical?

An annual physical is a much more extensive examination than the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* or *Annual Wellness Visit*. In addition to collecting medical history, it may also include a vital signs check, lung exam, head and neck exam, abdominal exam, neurological exam, dermatological exam, and extremities exam.

Clinical laboratory tests are not included in either the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* or *Annual Wellness Visit*. Usually, lab tests are done at the routine follow up visits, however if warranted, this must be charged separately and the costs of the lab tests will be applied to your deductible or copay.

9) I'm new to Medicare and normally receive a full physical exam from my doctor every year. I'm due for my next physical, and since I'm eligible for a *Welcome to Medicare Visit*, how should I schedule my appointment?

When you call our office, just let us know that you want the *Welcome to Medicare Visit* or *Annual Wellness Visit*.

10) I'm 80 years old and plan to schedule an *Annual Wellness Visit* with my doctor. Will that include a check-up for my blood pressure and recent memory loss?

No, we cannot address these issues at the time of your *Annual Wellness Visit*. You should schedule a separate appointment for any other acute or chronic problems.

As always, for any further questions related to billing or processes of either the

Welcome to Medicare Visit or Annual Wellness Visit,

Please contact our office at (910) 893-2641.

Our staff will be glad to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have!