

# Aging Well

## Getting the most out of your Medicare benefits.

**As a Medicare beneficiary,** you are entitled to a wellness visit with your primary care physician once a year. What better way to work together to help you stay healthy and live longer!

**As a primary care provider,** we know that the key to your health is prevention. The Medicare benefit is designed to have you and your healthcare provider work together to develop a personalized health plan for you that focuses on prevention and wellness.

### Welcome to Medicare - Initial Visit

This one-time exam is designed to create a baseline for your health and goals for wellness, and is covered within the first 12 months of receiving Medicare coverage.

### Annual Wellness Visit

The Annual Wellness Visit is covered by Medicare once per year. Having your Annual Wellness Visit each year allows your healthcare provider to develop and recommend a personal plan for health screenings based on your current health and risk factors. Annual Wellness Visits like these are a way of catching potentially serious health issues early. If you've had your Welcome to Medicare Visit, you will need to wait 12 months before scheduling an Annual Wellness Visit. We recommend that you schedule a separate visit to address specific medical conditions.

#### **There are specific elements of this exam that are required for Medicare to cover the cost of the visit:**

- Height and weight/waist circumference
- Blood pressure
- Detection of any cognitive impairment
- Visual acuity screening on your Welcome to Medicare Visit and your first Annual Wellness Visit

#### **Your initial Welcome to Medicare and Annual Wellness Visit includes:**

- A health risk assessment
- A review of medical and family history
- Developing or updating a list of current providers and prescriptions
- Review for potential risk for depression and level of safety
- A checklist for appropriate health screenings
- A visual acuity screening on your initial Welcome to Medicare Visit and your first Annual Wellness Exam (simple vision screening)

#### **Services *not* covered in these visits:**

- Most Medicare insurance plans *will not cover a preventive physical exam*. Please check with your insurance company about coverage
- Diagnosis and treatment of a new or existing condition
- Cost of recommended tests
- Any other services provided during an Annual Wellness Visit appointment *may incur a separate charge*

If you receive other services during these visits, there will be a separate charge which Medicare may not cover.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## When should I have a Welcome to Medicare Visit and Annual Wellness Visit?

If you are new to Medicare, you qualify for a Welcome to Medicare Visit within the first 12 months of coverage. This visit is a great way to get up-to-date on important screenings, vaccinations and talk with your provider about your family history and how to stay healthy.

You should have an Annual Wellness Visit each year. This allows us to develop or update a personal plan for preventative services and health screenings based on your current health and risk factors.

## What should I expect during my visit?

Your provider's nurse will check your blood pressure, vision, weight, height and will calculate your body mass index (BMI). Body mass index is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both men and women.

Your healthcare provider will check to make sure you are up-to-date with preventive screenings and Medicare offered services such as cancer screenings and immunizations.

During a Welcome to Medicare Visit you will receive a visual acuity screening, review of potential risk for depression and level of safety and information on creating advance directives. Your provider may also order or suggest further tests, labs or health programs depending on your general health and medical history.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Medical conditions identified during the Annual Wellness Visit and requiring further evaluation and treatment by your provider are subject to Medicare deductibles and co-pays.

At the completion of the visit, you will get a copy of your customized health screening plan and other recommended services you should consider along with information regarding Patient Advanced Directives.

## Can I combine an Annual Wellness Visit with another appointment?

Combining an Annual Wellness Visit with another appointment is the most convenient way to have your wellness visit. The Annual Wellness Visit is covered by Medicare, **however, regular charges will apply for other portions of the appointment such as a routine medication check or physical exam.**

## Is there a charge for the Annual Wellness Visit or Welcome to Medicare Visit?

The Annual Wellness Visit or Welcome to Medicare Visit is covered 100% by Medicare, however, these visits do not include new or existing health conditions, other medical concerns or medication refills. **A separate charge would be applied to these services**, whether they are provided on the day of the Annual Wellness Visit or during another visit.

### For more information

Medicare has a number of helpful publications to provide you with more information online at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

- **Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services** includes an explanation of what is covered by Medicare.
- **Welcome to Medicare Physical Exam Questions and Answers** explains the difference between an Annual Wellness Visit and the Welcome to Medicare Visit and gives tips on how to prepare for both.
- **Medicare and You Handbook** is a comprehensive resource guide for Medicare beneficiaries.