

AGING WELL SERIES

Getting the Most of Your Medicare Wellness Visit

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Older adults often see their health care provider when they are sick or when they are asked to follow up on a health problem. However, regular visits can prevent you from getting sick and help you stay well. Medicare recommends yearly wellness care as you age to keep you healthy and active.

WHAT IS AN ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT?

Medicare pays for one wellness visit with your health care provider every year; it's called the Annual Wellness Visit (AWV). During your visit a doctor or nurse practitioner will help you create a plan based on your health, risk factors, and personal wellness goals. The visit is a great way to make sure you are up to date on health tests and shots that can help spot and avoid illness.

The AWV is not:

- A routine head-to-toe physical exam
- A visit to discuss new health problems

Note: If your visit includes other services (such as treating a new problem), it will not be included in the AWV. You may be charged the usual Medicare fees for that service.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR AN AWV?

If you have Medicare, you can get an annual wellness visit (AWV) by a Medicare provider for free once every 12 months.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

As part of your visit, your provider will:

- Review your health history.

- Review all medications you are taking.
- Ask about other doctors you are seeing, including specialists.
- Discuss diet and exercise.
- Ask if you are able to function in daily actions and tasks that are normally expected.
- Ask about home safety, including risk of falling.
- Screen for depression.
- Assess memory, reasoning, and judgment.
- Assess your hearing status.
- Provide a health care plan for you.

TIPS FOR YOUR VISIT

There are things that you can do to get ready for your visit.

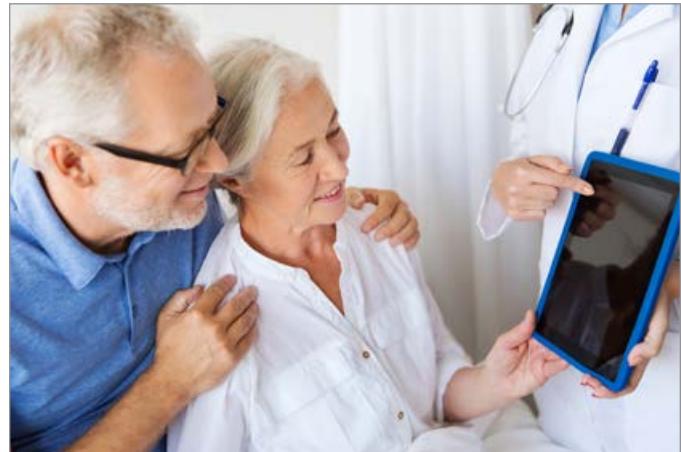
Before your visit, make sure you state that you are coming in for the "Medicare Annual Wellness Visit" and check to see that you will not be charged.

Bring the following with you to your visit:

- All medications you are taking, in the original bottles.
- A list of all doctors you are seeing, including specialists.
- A list of all of your shots, including type(s) and date(s).
- A copy of your advance directive, if you have one.

During your visit, your provider may ask you to fill out a form to see if you have any health risks. Your height, weight, blood pressure, and possibly other measurements will be checked as appropriate. You will be given a personal, written plan with suggested tests, shots and services to keep you in your best health. The plan may include advice and referrals for things such as diet, exercise, quitting smoking, and/or preventing falls.

After your visit, you may be scheduled for tests, shots, and other care, based on your needs. Medicare pays for many services to keep you healthy. However, plans



vary, so you will need to check with your Medicare plan for specific fees. Your healthcare provider can help you decide which services are right for you and how often you need them. You can also check the Medicare website to find out what services are covered, who is eligible, and how often services are covered.

One of the first steps you can take to better control your health is seeing your provider regularly. The Medicare AWV is part of this important step in your care to maintain good health. Please contact your provider to schedule your visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10110.pdf>

Medicare Preventive Services <https://www.mymedicarematters.org/coverage/part-a-b/preventive-services/>

Men: Stay Healthy at 50+ <http://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/men-over-50.pdf>

Women: Stay Healthy at 50+ <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/women-over-50.pdf>