

What is the “Welcome to Medicare” Wellness Visit?

Medicare covers a *one-time* preventive wellness visit within the first 12 months that you have Part B. The exam will include:

- A review of your health, medical history, family history, social history, medications, allergies, immunizations, preventative health screening tests and certain cancer screening tests.
- A focused discussion about hearing loss, fall prevention, depression risk, dementia risk and care provided by any other physicians.
- A limited exam including height, weight, blood pressure, and a vision screen.
- **A comprehensive physical exam is not a routine part of this visit. If you have concerns, please discuss this with your provider.**
- Discuss smoking cessation, alcohol use, weight loss and nutritional concerns when appropriate.
- End of life planning such as advanced directives (living will).
- Your doctor will also give you advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health and stay well. You will receive a written plan (such as a checklist) when you leave letting you know which screenings and other preventive services you should have over the next 5-10 years.
- If you have not had recent lab testing, some basic lab studies such as cholesterol and diabetes testing may be drawn during your visit.
- Referrals may be made for screening studies such as osteoporosis screening, colon cancer screening, mammograms, glaucoma and hearing screens when indicated. Many of these screening studies are provided at no cost to you.

How much does the visit cost?

- You pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount, and copay/part B deductible are waived. The visit is covered by original Medicare (Part B) and Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C).
- If you have a screening colonoscopy, the procedure is performed at no cost to you. If an abnormality is identified and needs to be biopsied, there can be additional cost to you based on the number of biopsies performed.

What is not covered by a “Welcome to Medicare” examination?

- Does not cover treatment of acute medical problems or management of chronic illnesses.
- If you wish to address acute problems during your “Welcome to Medicare” visit you may also be charged for a routine office visit.
- The Welcome to Medicare visit does not cover in-office procedures or
- When acute problems are addressed, you pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount after you have met your Part B deductible and any copay that may be required.

What should you bring to the visit?

You should bring the following things with you when you go to your "Welcome to Medicare" physical visit:

- Medical records, including immunization records (if you are seeing a new doctor for the first time)
- Family health history - try to learn as much as you can about your family's health history before your appointment. Any information you can give your doctor can help determine if you are at risk for certain diseases.
- All of your actual medication, vitamins and supplements in their bottles.
- A list of all of your other physicians and any other healthcare providers
- Generally 8 hours of fasting (clear liquids are fine) is appropriate when checking certain blood test. Ask your physician or healthcare providers if you have questions about fasting and medications before your appointment. Only a very limited number of laboratory tests are covered during the AWW.

What is a "Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV)"?

Twelve months after you have had your Welcome to Medicare Visit, you are eligible to receive a Medicare Annual Wellness visit. The AWV is slightly less comprehensive as the Welcome to Medicare visit, but still covers much of the same information as the Welcome to Medicare benefit. You will continue to qualify for the AWV every twelve months thereafter.

Additional information on preventive services can be found in our publication titled, [Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services](#). Please also visit the [Preventive Services](#) section of Medicare.gov

The copay and deductibles are waived for the AMV just as they are for the "Welcome to Medicare" examination