

Doctor Visits

Get Your Medicare Wellness Visit Every Year



The Basics

Overview

If you have Medicare, be sure to schedule a yearly wellness visit with your doctor or nurse. A yearly wellness visit is a great way to help you stay healthy.

What happens during a yearly wellness visit?

First, the doctor or nurse will ask you to fill out a questionnaire called a health risk assessment. Answering these questions will help you get the most from your yearly wellness visit.

During your visit, the doctor or nurse may:

- Go over your health risk assessment with you
- Measure your height and weight and check your blood pressure
- Ask about your health history and any conditions that run in your family
- Ask about other doctors you see and any medicines you take
- Give advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health, and stay well

- Look for any changes in your ability to think, learn, or remember
- Ask about any risk factors for substance use disorder and talk with you about treatment options, if needed

If you take opioids to treat pain, the doctor or nurse may talk with you about your risk factors for opioid use disorder, review your treatment plan, and tell you about non-opioid treatment options. They may also refer you to a specialist.

Finally, the doctor or nurse may give you a short, written plan to take home. This plan will include any screening tests and other preventive services that you'll need in the next several years. Preventive services are health care services that help keep you from getting sick.

Plan Your Visit

When can I go for a yearly wellness visit?

You can start getting Medicare wellness visits after you've had Medicare Part B for longer than 12 months. Keep in mind you'll need to wait 12 months in between Medicare wellness visits.

Do I need to have a “Welcome to Medicare” visit first?

You don't need to have a “Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit before getting a yearly wellness visit.

If you choose to get the “Welcome to Medicare” visit during the first 12 months you have Medicare Part B, you'll have to wait 12 months before you can get your first yearly wellness visit.

[Learn more about the “Welcome to Medicare” visit.](#)

What about cost?

With Medicare Part B, you can get a wellness visit once a year at no cost to you. Check to make sure the doctor or nurse accepts Medicare when you schedule your appointment.

If you get any tests or services that aren't included in the yearly wellness visit (like an extra blood test), you may have to pay some of those costs.

Who Can Get Medicare?

Medicare is a federal health insurance program. You may be able to get Medicare if you:

- Are age 65 years or older
- Are under age 65 years and have a disability
- Have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also called Lou Gehrig's disease
- Have permanent kidney failure (called end-stage renal disease)

You must be living in the United States legally for at least 5 years to qualify for Medicare.

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