



Health care benefits include a way to identify certain medical conditions early on and to begin treatment before they become chronic or life-threatening.

These benefits are provided through the Initial Preventive Physical Exam (or Welcome to Medicare Exam) and, thereafter, in a yearly Annual Wellness Visit. This resource will describe each exam and how it may benefit your health and overall wellness.

## ▶ Initial Preventive Physical Exam

The Initial Preventive Physical Examination, also known as the “Welcome to Medicare Exam,” is available to all beneficiaries free of charge during the **first 12 months of Medicare Part B coverage**.

This is a one-time preventive visit that helps you and your doctor develop a personalized plan to prevent disease, improve your health, and help you stay well.

### A few things to remember:

- This is a free service with no copayment or deductible for the visit.
- Once you have signed up for Part B, just call your doctor and schedule your Welcome to Medicare Exam.
- The visit includes a comprehensive review of your medical history, preventive tests and screenings, and planning for a healthy future.

## What should you expect during the exam?

During the visit your doctor will:

- ✓ Record and evaluate your medical and family history, current health conditions, prescriptions, and will discuss end-of-life planning;
- ✓ Check your blood pressure, vision, weight, and height to get a baseline for your care;
- ✓ Make sure you are up-to-date with preventive screenings and services, such as cancer screenings and shots; and
- ✓ Order further tests, depending on your general health and medical history.

Following the visit, your doctor will give you a plan or checklist with free screenings and preventive services that you may need (like mammograms or colonoscopies). This is also an excellent time to speak to your doctor about any concerns you may have.



## What should you bring to the exam?

- ✓ **Medical records, including immunization records.** Even if your current doctor performs the visit, gather as much information as you can to make sure nothing is overlooked.
- ✓ **Family health history.** Try to learn as much as you can about your family’s health history before your appointment. This will help you and your doctor better understand what screenings you should get and what to watch for in the future.
- ✓ **Prescription drugs.** Bring a list of any prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and supplements that you currently take, how often you take them, and why.

## ▶ Annual Wellness Visit

People with Medicare may receive an annual wellness exam once every 12 months. This yearly visit will help you and your doctor to develop or update a personalized plan to prevent disease based on your current health and risk factors. A few things to remember:

- You must have Medicare Part B for longer than 12 months.
- If you already had your Welcome to Medicare Exam, the **first** annual wellness exam cannot take place until 12 months later.
- You do not need to receive a Welcome to Medicare Exam to be eligible for an Annual Wellness Visit.
- This is not a routine physical exam. Medicare does not provide coverage for routine physical exams.
- You pay nothing for the exam.\*

*\* If you get additional tests or services during the same visit that are not covered under these preventive benefits, you may have to pay coinsurance, and the Medicare Part B deductible may apply.*



Any health professional can provide an Annual Wellness Exam. This includes a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, and other medical professionals, or a team of such medical professionals who are working under the direct supervision of a physician.

## During the visit your doctor will:

- ✓ Review medical and family history.
- ✓ Take blood pressure, weight, height, body mass index, and other routine measurements.
- ✓ Detect any cognitive impairment.
- ✓ Review potential risk factors for depression, functional ability, and level of safety.
- ✓ Develop a written screening schedule (such as a checklist) for the next five to 10 years. This includes a list of risk factors and conditions where interventions are recommended.
- ✓ Provide personalized health advice and referrals for health education and preventive counseling.



## Bring the following information with you:

- ✓ **Medical records**, including immunization records;
- ✓ **Family health history**, in as much detail as possible;
- ✓ A full **list of medications and supplements**, including calcium and vitamins, how often and how much of each is taken; and
- ✓ A full **list of your current providers and suppliers** involved in providing care.

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If you would like assistance with information contained in this publication, please call the Florida *Elder Helpline* toll-free at 1-800-96-ELDER (**1-800-963-5337**) and ask for a **SHINE counselor**.

The Florida SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Program provides free and unbiased health insurance counseling to the disabled, elders, and their respective family members or caregivers. For more information on health insurance issues, please visit our website at [www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org).