



Date: Jan. 28, 2008

Contact: Megan D. Smith
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Medicare's Initial Preventive Physical Exam

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Once you enroll in Medicare Part B, it is important to schedule your "Initial Preventive Physical Exam" immediately because it will only be covered if it occurs within the first six months that you have Part B.

If this six-month period has passed, your family physician will give you a notice that Medicare probably will not pay for this service. If you still want to get the service, you will be asked to sign an agreement that you will pay for the service yourself if Medicare does not pay for it.

The exam will include a thorough review of your health, education and counseling about the preventive services you need, and referrals for other care. This physical exam is a great opportunity to talk with your family physician about your health and to get up-to-date on important screenings and vaccinations.

"This exam provides a specific evaluation for issues that are not assessed during a regular follow-up visit for a chronic medical condition such as Diabetes, it also allows for risk assessment for depression, falls and safety to be discussed during the visit," said Suellywn Stewart, M.D., a family physician from Westerville, Ohio. "The exam also provides an appropriate time to counsel patients on other issues such as weight control, smoking cessation and the importance of preventive screenings."

During the exam, your family physician will record your medical history, check your blood pressure, weight and height, and make sure that you are up-to-date with your immunizations. Your family physician also may give you a vision test and an electrocardiogram (EKG). Depending on your general health and medical history, further tests may be ordered if necessary. Your family physician will also give you advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health or stay well. You will also get a written plan when you leave letting you know which screenings and other preventive services you should get.

When you go for your exam, make sure you bring your medical and immunization records; a list of prescription drugs that you currently take, how often you take them, and why; your family health history; and any information you can give your family physician to help determine if you are at risk for certain diseases.

"I ask patients to bring all of the pill bottles, over-the-counter medications and herbal/vitamin supplements they are currently taking. I also ask that patients think about the illnesses in their family members so appropriate counseling may take place during the exam," stated Stewart.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.



FACT SHEET

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What the exam will include

- Thorough review of your health
- Education and counseling about the preventive services you need
- Referrals for other care
- Give advice on preventing diseases, improving your health or staying well.
- A written plan letting you know which screenings and other preventive services you should get

What will happen during the exam

- Record your medical history
- Check your blood pressure, weight and height
- Make sure your immunizations are up-to-date

What you should bring

- Medical and immunization records
- A list of prescription drugs you are currently taking, how often you take them and why
- Your family health history
- Any other health information

Source: <http://www.medicare.gov>