

**To:** Our Medicare Patients:  
**Subject:** Medicare Annual Wellness and Other Preventive Visits

Beginning January 1, 2011, Medicare covers an “Annual Wellness Visit” in addition to the one-time “Welcome to Medicare” exam. The “Welcome to Medicare” exam occurs only once during your first twelve months as a Medicare patient. You may receive your Annual Wellness Visit after you have been with Medicare for more than one year, or it has been at least one year since your “Welcome to Medicare” exam.

Initial Preventive Physical Exam (IPPE)	“Welcome to Medicare” is only for <i>new</i> Medicare patients. This must be done in the 1 <sup>st</sup> year as a Medicare patient.
Annual Wellness Visit, Initial	At least 1 yr after the “Welcome to Medicare” exam.
Annual Wellness Visit, Subsequent	Once a year (more than 1 yr + 1 day after the last Wellness Visit).

**The Annual Wellness Visit is not the same thing as what many people often refer to as their yearly physical exam. Medicare is very specific about what the “Annual Wellness Visit” includes and excludes.**

At the Annual Wellness Visit, your doctor will talk to you about your medical history, review your risk factors, and make a personalized prevention plan to keep you healthy. The visit does *not* include a hands-on exam or any testing that your doctor may recommend, nor does it include any discussion about any new or current medical problems, conditions, or medications. You *must* schedule another visit to address those issues.

If you would like to schedule an annual physical, including any lab work or other diagnostic testing, medication management, vaccinations, and other services, please understand that these services will be charged and covered according to Medicare’s usual coverage guidelines.

If you would like to schedule an “Annual Wellness Visit” you must request specifically “Annual Wellness Visit” when making your appointment. You must arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to fill our Medicare required paperwork. You *do not* need to fast since no lab testing is included in this visit. Please remember that an “Annual Wellness Visit” does not replace your usually scheduled office visits and is NOT an annual physical exam. Also remember that this visit is not a “hands on” exam. Finally, please note that we are not allowed to discuss new or current medical problems or to refill medications during a Medicare “Annual Wellness Visit.”