

Newsletter

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Annual Wellness Visits

As your physician, your well-being is important to me. I am committed to providing care for your current health concerns, but I am equally committed to provide health care that will lower your risk of illness or injury. As Medicare beneficiaries, you are entitled to an ANNUAL WELLNESS VISIT (AWV). Often, you may hear this called a “physical”, but Medicare does not pay for a traditional “head-to-toe” physical. Medicare does pay for a wellness visit- once a year. This can be confusing. You may be asking yourself- well what is the difference? So, let’s review what an AWV cover and does not cover.¹

Covered	NOT Covered
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical history (current illnesses, hospital and surgery history, injuries)• Review of Preventative Screens (mammograms, colonoscopies etc.)• Vaccine Review• Allergy review• Medication review (includes supplements and vitamins)• Family History• Social History review (alcohol, tobacco, drug use, diet and exercise)• Depression Screen• Hearing screen• Fall Screen and Safety Screen• Ability to complete activities of daily living (using the phone, getting around, doing housework etc.)• Focused Physical Exam (height, weight, blood pressure and vision)• EKG (done on your FIRST AWV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New medical concerns• Discussion of existing health problems

As you can see, the AWV covers so much of what you would normally expect in a traditional physical. The main difference you may see is in the physical exam portion. This visit is truly a conversation about your health and identifying parts of your health and history that put you at risk for disease. The result of that conversation is a written personalized preventative health plan for the next 5 years. This plan may include a list of preventative

¹ *Fam Pract Manag.* 2012 Mar-Apr;19(2):11-12.

screens (like mammograms or colonoscopies) you may need. It will list the vaccines and labs that may be due. It may also include a referral for anything that was identified during the visit that needs specialist evaluation. This is a health road map just for you. Medicare will cover this visit in its entirety and all the education and counseling that comes with it. We want you to get the most of your Medicare benefits- please call us if you have any questions!

COVID-19

Sorry- COVID-19 hasn't gone away. Let's talk some numbers: The CDC has reported that total cases in the US is over 5 million. Texas total cases is now over 500,000. ²"But, Doc!" you might ask, "What does that mean...total cases?" So, the CDC defines total cases as confirmed AND probable cases. A probable case means someone who has had the symptoms of COVID-19 and has been in contact with someone with a confirmed positive COVID-19 test.

Are these big numbers? YES

Should I still be taking precautions to protect myself and others from this virus? YES

For 5 months, your clinic has been implementing procedures and processes with your safety and comfort in mind. Before getting to work, our staff is screened daily for symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19. For your protection and ours, the staff wears masks at all times and follows proper hand hygiene protocol. We have added telemedicine services, so you can get the medical care you need from your home. We have reduced crowding in the waiting room by asking patients to wait in their cars until they are called in for their appointment. The clinic is running full steam ahead to continue to provide you the same quality of care that you have come to expect. We are OPEN and look forward to seeing you.

As you know well by now, COVID-19 is being spread through the community, yes, even our community. Now, more than ever, it is important to continue to practice physical distancing, mask wearing, and proper hand hygiene. We understand that life has to go on, but continue to exercise caution if you must go out to large gatherings. Wear your mask and try not to touch your face. I know that you may be having COVID-19 fatigue, but all of our continued efforts will hopefully pay off when we start to hit flu season.

Enjoy the dog days of summer. Stay Cool. Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing.html>