

WHAT IS A WELLNESS VISIT?

A wellness visit is a conversation between a patient and a health care provider with the intention to assess risk factors, schedule testing, and provide education and counseling with the end goal of **preventing *potential* health conditions**. If a health issue is discovered during this visit, a follow-up visit may be needed for further diagnosis and management of the health condition. If your insurance requires a co-pay, it may not be required for a wellness visit.

A wellness visit may include:

- Vital statistics (height, weight, BMI, temperature, blood pressure)
- Assessment of risk factors (lifestyle, family medical history, etc)
- Smoking cessation (quitting) counseling
- Sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention
- Discussion of family medical history
- Yearly Pap smear and breast exam (for women)
- Depression screening
- Cancer screening (ordering routine colonoscopy, **screening mammogram**)

A wellness visit does NOT include:

- Treating a *known* health condition (ex: if you know you have chronic pain, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, etc.), you cannot be treated for your existing condition during your wellness visit.
- Assessment of skin condition(s)
- Minor surgical procedures (ex: removal of wart, cyst, mole, etc.)
- Medication refills

Why can't the doctor treat my existing medical issues during my wellness visit?

Doctors are not allowed to provide a service while billing for another type of service. Such activity is considered **billing fraud** and is *punishable by law*. **Your doctor wants to provide you with *both* wellness services as well as follow up care for your known medical conditions**, but they must be scheduled separately.

It is important for you to schedule your appointment(s) so that the scheduler can make sure you have the correct amount of time with your provider to meet your healthcare needs. **You may be able to schedule your wellness visit on the same day as your follow-up care**, *but you will be billed separately*. You are ultimately responsible for understanding your own insurance coverage.

All Medicare patients must schedule wellness and follow-up on two separate days.