



Road map to senior health

Grow better
as you grow older.



Staying healthy as you age is no accident, and we want to help you plan to get the most out of your life.

When you join the ranks of Medicare, your plan pays for most medical care including wellness visits that keep you happy and healthy. One of the most important steps you can take is having a **Medicare Annual Wellness Visit**. Or if you are new to Medicare, you may be eligible for your **Welcome to Medicare Visit**.

Together, you and an SSM Health Medical Group provider can develop a personalized plan to manage your health.

Use this guide as a road map and introduction to the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit that you may be eligible for as a Medicare Part B recipient.

Don't forget to look for health tips and a tasty recipe in this guide!

Complimentary Medicare wellness visits



Your Annual Wellness Visit

is a once-a-year preventive exam. It is intended to get you up-to-date on basic screenings, immunizations, and preventive services. Your visit also provides the opportunity for you and your doctor to develop a personalized plan, based on your current health and risk factors, to manage your health and prevent disease.

A Welcome to Medicare Visit

is available to you within your first year of enrollment in Medicare Part B. After you have this exam, you're eligible for subsequent Annual Wellness Visits provided free every 12 months with any SSM Health Medical Group physician.

What happens during your visit?

Unlike a comprehensive physical exam, your Annual Wellness Visit includes screenings and vaccines, and possible referrals for additional tests or services, if needed. During the exam your SSM Health Medical Group provider and medical staff will do the following:

- Measure your height, weight, blood pressure, and body mass index (BMI)
- Review your medical, surgical, social history (such as alcohol, tobacco, and drug use) and family history
- Review your current prescribed and over-the-counter medications
- Perform a basic vision and hearing test
- Perform a basic depression and cognitive screening test
- Complete a health risk and safety assessment
- Discuss end-of-life planning
- Plan a list of recommended preventive screenings and services you may need in the coming years
- Discuss referrals for appropriate services or programs to help minimize or treat potential health risks

Keep in mind that some of these services may be performed by a registered nurse, physician assistant or medical assistant.



What should you bring to your visit?

Please come prepared to your **Annual Wellness Visit** with the following information:

- Updates on any medical events from the past year.
- Your family history - try to learn as much as you can about your family's health history before your appointment. Any information you give your doctor can help determine if you're at risk for certain diseases.
- A list of prescription and over-the-counter drugs that you currently take, including how often you take them and why.
- A list of any other health care professionals that are currently involved in your care.

Tips for managing medications

When you're juggling multiple medications, it's easy to mistakenly let a few doses fall through the cracks.

Taking prescriptions exactly as your doctor ordered is essential. You may need clever tricks so you never forget a dose, no matter how busy you get.

Here are ideas you can use to make medication management easy:

- **Download an app for your phone or tablet.** Apps are available to help you create medication schedules and remind you when it's time to refill your prescriptions. If you're taking medications for controlling high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or other health problems, this can be especially helpful. The more medications you take, the more important it is for you to have a documented schedule of what to take and when.
- **Ask your pharmacist for blister packs.** Some pharmacies offer blister packaging services. They package your pills in disposable blister packs that can make it convenient for you to take the right medicines at the right time of day. Blister packaging helps you avoid taking a double dose or missing a pill. Some pharmacies may charge extra for blister packaging, but if it helps you keep your medications organized, it could be worth the cost.
- **Use one pharmacy.** Find a pharmacy where you can enroll in an automatic refill program. You can get reminders through phone calls, text messages, and emails when your medications are available for pickup. It's a great way to make sure you'll never run out.

(source: [everydayhealth.com](https://www.everydayhealth.com))

Preventing illness



What can you do to help prevent illness?

You can stay healthy, live longer, and delay or prevent much disease by doing the following:

- **Exercise** – Be physically active for 20 to 30 minutes, five or six days a week. Talk to your doctor about the right exercise program for you.
- **Eat well** – Enjoy a healthy diet of different foods, including fruits, vegetables, protein (meat, fish or beans) and whole grains (brown rice, pasta, or cereal). You should also limit the amount of saturated fat you eat.
- **Keep a healthy weight** – Watch your portions and try to balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn by exercising.
- **Don't smoke** – If you smoke, talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.
- **Get preventive services** – Delay or lessen the effects of diseases with preventive services, such as screenings to find disease early and vaccines to keep you from getting dangerous illnesses.

Brain-boosting smoothies for senior nutrition

A healthy diet feeds your body inside and out. Eating well should be a part of your routine no matter what your age. In fact, the Alzheimer's Association describes how brain-healthy foods increase blood flow to the brain, reducing risks for Alzheimer's disease, and helping prevent heart disease and diabetes.

Blueberry Brain-Boost Smoothie

- 1 cup apple juice
- 1 fresh, ripe banana
- 1 ½ cups frozen blueberries
- ½ cup frozen raspberries
- ¼ cup raw walnuts, preferably soaked and drained

Directions: Combine the apple juice and banana in a blender. Add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Serves two.

(source: aplaceformom.com/blog/)

Tips for choosing your primary care physician

The SSM Health Medical Group advantage

Many medical groups offer primary care services, so why are we different?

SSM Health Medical Group focuses on compassionate, patient-centered health care for seniors.

We provide:

- A high-level commitment to quality care
- High patient satisfaction
- A team approach to patient care
- Experience and professionalism

At SSM Health Medical Group, our doctors offer you the best choice for health expertise, trusted care and convenience. Plus, you'll have access to advanced care centers for heart, cancer, and orthopedics.

Choose an SSM Health Medical Group primary care physician

SSM Health Medical Group has a strong tradition in exceptional primary care for seniors.

It starts with specialized teams of board-certified physicians, along with highly trained physician assistants or nurse practitioners, nurses, and support staff. They work together to ensure that all patients receive personalized care for their unique needs. To find a primary care physician in your area, visit [ssmhealth.com/find-a-doctor](https://www.ssmhealth.com/find-a-doctor).

To learn more about SSM Health Senior Care, visit [ssmhealth.com/senior-health](https://www.ssmhealth.com/senior-health).

To find a primary care physician in your area, visit [ssmhealth.com/find-a-doctor](https://www.ssmhealth.com/find-a-doctor).

General Medical Disclaimer

The information, material and contents contained herein (“content”) are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

All medical practice management, patient care decisions and selection of a primary care physician will be exclusively your responsibility.

Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Reliance on any information provided herein is solely at your own risk. The content is provided on an “as is” basis.

All of our hospitals, doctor’s offices, and other facilities have implemented enhanced safety measures. These include requiring all individuals to be screened for symptoms and requiring face masks for all upon entry. This will ensure you and your family are protected every step of the way.

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