

Preventive Services

Medicare offers numerous Preventive Care and WellCare Services – either free of charge or at reduced rates – to Medicare beneficiaries. Unfortunately, the services are not well known and therefore woefully underutilized.

For starters, those who are new to Medicare are entitled to a one-time “Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit. This initial visit is an excellent introduction into the Medicare program and can give beneficiaries insight into maximizing the full menu of preventive care and screening services available. Ideally, it will also establish a yearly routine of reviewing your health conditions with your doctor and creating a plan for the next 12 months.

Among many of the services are certain cancer screenings, some vaccinations, cardiovascular disease screenings, diabetes screening and self-management training, and glaucoma testing. A more comprehensive listing of the services offered can be found at www.medicare.gov/coverage/preventive-screening-services.

A final important note should be highlighted. Although the services discussed are largely free or offered at reduced rates, any additional services or care provided in these visits that goes beyond what Medicare stipulates, the beneficiary may be responsible for some level of payment. Services that may fall outside those outlined as preventive care can be lab work, additional testing, and even pursuing a line of questioning outside the scope of the appointment.