

Wellness (Preventive) Visits

Helping you stay healthy

The most important things you can do to prevent disease and be healthy are:

- Be tobacco free
- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy diet
- Get the right kinds of preventive health services—screenings, counseling, and preventive medicines—at the right times.

Some health insurance plans include a wellness visit as part of your preventive care benefit. A wellness visit is usually an annual physical. Did you know that there is a difference between a wellness visit and an illness or follow-up visit?

Information below and to the right will help you understand the difference and assure your benefits are administered correctly. A wellness visit, also known as a preventive visit, differs from an illness or follow-up visit in two important ways:

1. The length of the visit, and
2. What is done at the visit.



A follow-up visit is generally brief and focuses on known health conditions. A follow-up visit allows the doctor to treat and manage known health issues. Counseling and coordination of care, such as blood tests, is provided for the specific problem(s) and the patient and family's needs.

A wellness visit is longer to allow for the completion of age-specific counseling and care (i.e. immunizations, screenings, etc.). **A wellness visit is intended to assist in the assessment of risk factors, testing, education, and counseling with the goal of preventing potential health conditions.** Wellness visits are not intended to diagnose or treat any condition. If a health issue is discovered, a follow-up visit (rather than continued wellness visits) may be needed for further diagnosis and management of the health condition.

Doctors are not allowed to provide a service while billing for another type of service. Such activity is considered fraud. Your doctor wants to provide you wellness services as well as follow up care for your known health condition(s), but the scheduling for a wellness visit and a follow up visit are very different and scheduling each visit separately assures that time is allowed for each visit to be completed. It is important that you make known the type of service(s) you want when you schedule your appointment. Doing so will allow the appointment coordinator to schedule the correct amount of time for your doctor to give care to you.

If you have a known health condition (for example, high blood pressure) you may seek to have a wellness visit as well as be checked and treated for your known health condition while making only one trip to the doctor. This can be done, but both visits need to be scheduled together and the doctor must bill for both the wellness visit and the evaluation and management (follow-up) of your known health condition.

By doing so, you are assured that you are provided the proper amount of time for both your wellness visit and your known health condition. It should be noted that lab tests performed for your known health condition(s) are considered diagnostic rather than preventative and will be charged separately rather than included as a preventative screen.

Remember to check with your health insurance plan to:

- Confirm benefit coverage and any dollar limit.
- Notify them of expected care or treatment.
- Get preauthorization, if needed.

Get the right kind of preventive health services—screenings, counseling, and preventive medicines—at the right times. **By working together, you and your health care providers can make a winning team that will make the best decisions for your good health!**



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