

Your Passport 2 Health Guide

How to use your
Medicare Advantage
preventive care benefits



Regence BlueShield serves select counties in the state of Washington and is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Y0062_P2H2017 Accepted

Preventive services checklist

Talk to your doctor to determine if you are due for any preventive health services or screenings. Use the checklist below to keep track of services you've already received and those you may still need to get.

Flu shot	<input type="radio"/>
Annual wellness visit	<input type="radio"/>
Colorectal cancer screening	<input type="radio"/>
Breast cancer screening (mammogram)	<input type="radio"/>
Bone mineral density test for osteoporosis	<input type="radio"/>
Join the Silver&Fit® Fitness program	<input type="radio"/>
Diabetic eye exam	<input type="radio"/>
Diabetic test that monitors how kidneys are functioning	<input type="radio"/>
Diabetic blood sugar monitoring test (HbA1c)	<input type="radio"/>
Check if eligible for the Disease Management program (see page 10 for details)	<input type="radio"/>

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Making healthy choices

There are many day-to-day choices you can make to stay healthy, live longer and maintain or improve your quality of life.

Eat healthy

Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, protein (like meat, fish or beans) and whole grains. Limit your intake of processed foods, sodium and saturated fat. Watch out for hidden sugar in prepared or processed foods, even the sugars with “healthy” sounding names. They’ll be listed in the ingredient list with names like:

Sucrose	Agave nectar
Fructose	Barley malt
Dextrose	Cane juice
Maltodextrin	Corn syrup

Sleep well

Get seven to eight hours of sleep. Set a bedtime routine and turn off the TV and power down devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

Maintain a healthy weight

Watch your portion sizes, and try to balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn through exercise. New to exercising? See our tips on the next page to help you get started.

Exercise

Regular exercise increases strength and flexibility, improves bone health, and helps you prevent and/or manage chronic health conditions. It's easy to get started, but talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

Find your favorite. Make a habit of walking, hiking, biking, swimming, or yoga. Being active is easier and more fun when you love what you're doing.

Set a goal. Get 20 to 30 minutes of moderate physical activity five or six days a week. You can break this into 10-minute chunks if you need to.

Keep an activity log. And reward yourself when you reach your weekly or monthly goals.

Limit excuses. Sometimes life gets in the way, but more often than not, we get in our own way. Figure out a plan ahead of time for different times, locations and activities you can do when you find yourself saying there's "no time," you're "too tired" or it's "too wet/cold/hot outside."

Join a gym or fitness class. Your Medicare Advantage plan includes a no-cost membership to a fitness club or exercise center near you. To sign up, visit www.SilverandFit.com or call **1-877-427-4788** (TTY/TDD 1-877-710-2746), M-F, 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific time.

Manage stress

Meditation and deep-breathing exercises have been shown to improve mood, enhance your overall sense of well-being, and increase information-processing and decision-making abilities. Talk to a health professional for additional help with managing stress.

Socialize

Join a local book club. Play cards or chess with your neighbors. Volunteer at an animal shelter. Research suggests that regular social interaction helps with focus and memory, as well as slows or prevents cognitive decline.

Play games

There are books, websites and mobile apps that offer games like sudoku, brain teasers, crossword puzzles and other entertaining mental exercises. Taking the time to exercise your brain can add new brain cells and solidify their connections.

Don't smoke

If you smoke, talk with your doctor about getting help to quit. Take advantage of the tobacco use cessation counseling preventive benefit in your health plan (see page 20 for details).

Safety and wellness

Managing high blood pressure

Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Blood pressure should not exceed 140/90 for those under the age of 60 and/or those who have been diagnosed with diabetes and 150/90 for those over 60.

Take these steps to prevent or manage high blood pressure:

- Avoid smoking or using other tobacco products
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Exercise regularly—at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week
- Eat a healthy diet that includes a lot of fruits and vegetables
- Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol

Prescription medications (such as ACE inhibitors or ARBs) can help lower your blood pressure when lifestyle changes are not enough. These medications work best when you take them regularly and as directed by your doctor.

High-risk medications

Some medications work differently in your body as you age. Some are considered high-risk medications that may cause side effects such as low blood pressure, dizziness, confusion, sleepiness, dry mouth or constipation. Sometimes these side effects can even lead to injuries such as falls and fractures.

Ask your doctor if you are taking any high-risk medications and if there is a safer alternative. Switching to a safer medication could prevent any unwanted side effects or injuries.

Using medications safely

- Keep a list of your medications, including vitamins or other supplements.
- Keep your doctor updated on the medications you're taking.
- Follow directions carefully, and if you don't understand them, ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain them to you.
- Pay attention to the color and shape of your pills. If they look different at refill, ask your pharmacist to double-check them.
- Talk to your doctor about any allergies or side effects of the medications you're taking.

- Store all medications in a safe place, including out of reach of visiting children.
- Throw away expired or unused prescription medicines. Follow any specific disposal instructions on the drug label or patient information that accompanies the medication. When in doubt about proper disposal, talk to your pharmacist.

You may qualify for a free one-on-one consultation with a pharmacist who will work with you and your doctor to review your medications for safety, drug interactions and cost-savings opportunities. Please call **1-855-356-3212** to see if you qualify and for more information.

Preventing falls

More than one in three older adults fall each year. Falls sometimes result in broken bones or loss of mobility or independence.

Tips to help you prevent falls:

- If you've had a fall, let your doctor know. They may be able to help you avoid other falls.
- Incorporate activities and exercises that focus on balance and leg strength.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairs across the entire length of the stairway.
- Keep stairs and walking paths free of obstacles.
- Remove or secure small area rugs.
- Put electrical cords behind furniture or use a hide-a-cord device.
- Replace burned out bulbs and keep your home well-lit.
- Install a handrail and add a non-slip mat or non-skid strips to the bathtub or shower.
- Wear non-slip shoes, not slippers or socks.
- Ask your doctor to review your medicines to identify those that could make you dizzy or sleepy.
- Get your vision checked every year.

Maintaining bladder control

Bladder control problems may develop in women during pregnancy or after childbirth or menopause. Some older men may experience urinary incontinence due to prostate problems. Other causes include pelvic trauma and spinal cord damage. Caffeine or some prescription and over-the-counter medications may also contribute.

Fewer than half the people with bladder control problems ever discuss it with their doctor, leaving it untreated. Be sure to talk with your doctor if you think you may have bladder control problems.

Other bladder control advice:

- Drink smaller amounts of fluid throughout the day.
- Avoid bladder-irritating foods such as acidic fruits, spicy foods, tomato-based products, artificial sweeteners and chocolate.
- Try eliminating caffeine or alcohol for a week to see if it helps.
- Do Kegel exercises. Squeeze your pelvic floor muscles as if you're trying to stop the flow of urine or hold in gas.

Health management programs

Case management services

If you or a family member is dealing with a serious illness or injury, you don't have to handle it alone. Our medical case managers are dedicated advocates who will find the answers you need so you can focus on the health of you and your family.

Your case manager will:

- Provide information about your condition, illness or injury
- Help you navigate the health care system and make informed treatment decisions
- Support your doctor's treatment plan
- Ensure that you get the most from your benefits

Disease management program

If you have diabetes or heart disease, managing your condition is a good way to maintain or improve your quality of life. Our disease management program provides clinical and educational support to help you build the skills you need to reach your health goals. We also communicate with your doctor as a part of your health care team.

Our health management programs provide phone-based support services to our members at no cost. For more information about our health management programs, call 1-866-543-5765.

Preventive care benefits

This section contains information about preventive services offered under your Medicare Advantage plan. Review these services with your doctor so that you get the health advice and preventive care that is recommended for you.

“Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare.

How often?

This visit is covered only one time, and you must have the visit within the first 12 months of your Medicare eligibility.

Your doctor will:

- Record your medical history
- Record your height, weight and blood pressure
- Calculate your body mass index
- Give you a simple vision test
- Review your potential risk for depression
- Offer to talk with you about creating advance directives

Annual wellness visit

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare.

How often?

Once every calendar year.

Your doctor will:

- Perform a health risk assessment
- Review your medical and family history
- Develop or update a list of current providers and prescriptions
- Check your height, weight and blood pressure
- Detect any cognitive impairment
- Develop a screening schedule for preventive services
- Identify risk factors and recommend treatment options

Annual physical exam

In addition to the annual wellness visit, your Medicare Advantage plan includes an annual physical exam once every calendar year.

Note: You may have to pay a copay if you also are treated for a new medical condition or monitored for an existing condition at the same time you are getting your physical.

Bone mineral density test

Osteoporosis is a disease in which your bones become weak and brittle. There are no symptoms of osteoporosis and you may not know you have it until you break a bone. A bone mineral density test can help assess your risk for osteoporosis. In general, the lower your bone density, the higher your risk for a fracture.

Who is eligible?

People at risk for osteoporosis and who have one of these medical conditions:

- A woman whose health care provider says she's estrogen-deficient and at risk for osteoporosis, based on her medical history and other findings
- A person with vertebral abnormalities as shown by an X-ray
- A person receiving steroid treatments
- A person with hyperparathyroidism (an excess of a hormone that can weaken your bones due to calcium loss)
- A person taking an osteoporosis drug

How often?

Once every 24 months (more often if medically necessary).

Breast cancer screening (mammograms)

Every woman is at risk for breast cancer, and this risk increases with age. Breast cancer usually can be successfully treated when found early. Your risk of developing breast cancer increases if you:

- Had breast cancer in the past
- Have a family history of breast cancer
- Had your first baby after age 30
- Never had a baby

Who is eligible?

Women age 40 and older. Women 35–39 qualify for one baseline mammogram.

How often?

Once every calendar year.

Cardiovascular behavioral therapy and screenings

High cholesterol increases your risk for heart attack and stroke.

A cardiovascular disease risk reduction visit includes:

- Screening for high blood pressure
- Encouraging aspirin use if appropriate
- Counseling to promote a healthy diet

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare.

How often?

Once each year. Screening tests for cholesterol, lipid and triglyceride levels are covered once every 5 years.

Colorectal cancer screening

Your doctor uses colorectal cancer screening tests to help find pre-cancerous polyps (growths in the colon) so they can be removed before they become cancerous.

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare 50 and older, but there's no minimum age for having a screening colonoscopy.

How often?

- *Screening fecal occult blood test*—Once every 12 months
- *Screening flexible sigmoidoscopy*—Once every 48 months after the last flexible sigmoidoscopy or barium enema, or 120 months after a previous screening colonoscopy
- *Screening colonoscopy*—Once every 120 months (high risk every 24 months) or 48 months after a previous flexible sigmoidoscopy
- *Screening barium enema*—Once every 48 months (high risk every 24 months) when used instead of sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy

Depression screening

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare.

How often?

One depression screening per calendar year; screening must be done in a primary care setting.

Diabetes screening and management training

Diabetes is a medical condition in which your body doesn't make enough insulin, or has a reduced response to insulin. Diabetes causes your blood sugar to be too high because insulin is needed to use sugar properly. Talk with your doctor to see if you need a blood screening test to check for diabetes.

Diabetes screening (fasting blood glucose test)

Who is eligible?

People who are at risk for diabetes.

How often?

Up to two diabetes screenings every 12 months, based on the results of your screening tests.

Who's at risk?

You're considered at high risk if you have high blood pressure, dyslipidemia (history of abnormal cholesterol and triglyceride levels), obesity or a history of high blood sugar (glucose).

Medicare also covers these tests if you answer "yes" to two or more of the following questions:

- Are you 65 or older?
- Are you overweight?
- Do you have a family history of diabetes (parents, brothers or sisters)?

- Do you have a history of gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy), or have you ever had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds?

Diabetes self-management training

For people with diabetes, Medicare covers educational training to help manage their diabetes and prevent complications. You must have a written order from a doctor or other health care provider.

Obesity screening and counseling

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare may be screened for obesity. Counseling is covered for anyone found to have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more.

How often?

If you have a BMI of 30 or more, you are covered for intensive obesity counseling conducted in a primary care setting.

- One face-to-face visit each week for the first month
- One face-to-face visit every other week for months 2–6
- One face-to-face visit every month for months 7–12, if you lose 6.6 pounds during months 1–6

Vaccinations

Flu, pneumococcal (pneumonia) infections and hepatitis B can be life-threatening to an older person. All people 65 and older should get flu and pneumococcal shots. People who are under 65 but have a chronic illness, including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant), should get a flu shot. People at medium-to-high risk for hepatitis B should get hepatitis B shots.

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare are eligible for flu and pneumococcal shots. Certain people at medium or high risk for hepatitis B are eligible for hepatitis B shots.

How often?

Flu shots are given once per flu season. There are two different pneumococcal shots that are each given only once, at least a year apart. Three shots are needed for complete protection against hepatitis B. Check with your doctor about when to get hepatitis B shots if you qualify to get them.

Other important screenings

There are many other important preventive screenings that could save your life. Please talk to your doctor about scheduling the screenings that apply to you and your health risks.

Alcohol misuse screening and counseling

Who is eligible?

Adults who use alcohol but don't meet the medical criteria for alcohol dependency.

How often?

One alcohol misuse screening per calendar year; up to four counseling sessions per calendar year from a qualified primary care doctor in a primary care setting.

Cervical and vaginal cancer screening

Who is eligible?

All women with Medicare.

How often?

Pap test and pelvic exam once every 24 months, or once every 12 months for women at high risk and for women of child-bearing age who have had an exam that indicated cancer or other abnormalities in the past three years.

Prostate cancer screening

Who is eligible?

All men with Medicare over 50.

How often?

- *Digital rectal examination*— Once per calendar year
- *PSA test*— Once per calendar year

Tobacco use cessation counseling

Who is eligible?

All people with Medicare who use tobacco.

How often?

Medicare will cover up to eight face-to-face visits during a 12-month period. These visits must be provided by a qualified primary care doctor or practitioner in a primary care setting.

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Source: American Academy of Family Physicians, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

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REG-115731-16/11-16-WArep09846

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