

Understanding Medicare Wellness Visits: Initial Preventive Physical Exam

For people with Medicare, there are three wellness visits that provide important opportunities to promote good health through disease prevention and detection: the initial preventive physical exam (IPPE), initial annual wellness visit (AWV), and subsequent AWVs.

Also known as the “Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit, the IPPE is an introduction to Medicare and covered benefits and focuses on health promotion, disease prevention, and detection to help patients stay well. It is covered once per lifetime, in the first year of Medicare enrollment, at no cost to the patient.

What Are the Components of the IPPE?

During the IPPE, the provider will perform the following activities with the patient:

- Review medical and social health history
- Screen for potential depression risk factors and substance use disorders
- Evaluate functional ability through direct observation and/or screening questions
- Measure height, weight, BMI, visual acuity, and other factors, based on medical and social history and current clinical standards
- Offer information on end-of-life planning
- Provide education, counseling, and referral for preventive services

*For patients with a current opioid prescription, the provider will also review their potential opioid use disorder risk factors, evaluate their pain severity and current treatment plan, and provide information on non-opioid treatment options.

Who Can Perform the IPPE?

Medicare Part B covers an IPPE when performed by a physician or a qualified non-physician practitioner (e.g., physician assistant, nurse practitioner, certified clinical nurse specialist).

Visit the [CMS website](#) for more detailed information on IPPE components and billing codes. Additionally, this brief video summarizes the IPPE and other Medicare wellness visits, including when to give them, how to submit claims for them, and the components required for each visit.

