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## Preventative/Wellness or Medical Care office visit

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### PREVENTATIVE EXAMS MAY INCLUDE:

#### Screenings for:

- Cancers, including mammograms, colonoscopy, pap smears, prostate and lung
- Cardiovascular disease, including cholesterol levels
- High blood pressure, obesity and diabetes
- Lead poisoning
- Osteoporosis

#### Counseling for:

- Alcohol misuse
- Depression
- Healthy diet/exercise
- Tobacco use

#### Discussion about:

- Healthy lifestyles
- Fall prevention
- Vaccines

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

**Preventative/wellness** is defined as a medicine, procedure or other treatment that is designed to stop disease or ill health from occurring.

A preventative visit helps prevent or find problems before you feel sick. This visit helps you and your doctor plan ahead, set health goals and keep track of your progress.

**Medical Care** is defined as treating an ailment after it has occurred.

A medical care office visit (also known as diagnostic or problem-focused visit) most often treats new symptoms/injury or existing health problems. A person with a chronic disease may need to see a doctor more often than annually based on their health care needs.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q: Why fix it if it isn't broken?**

A: Even if you feel healthy, a preventative care visit once a year with your doctor may help you avoid some health problems, or find health problems early, when your chances for treatment and cure are better.

#### **Q: Why am I being charged for services that were part of my annual Preventative or Wellness visit?**

A: The way your insurance company knows that you have a particular diagnosis is through claims history. Physicians and hospitals are required by law to report the type of service that they are performing and the diagnosis related to these services; they must be as accurate as possible.

Preventative services are usually provided when there is no reason to suspect a problem. You and your provider may sometimes address both preventative and problem-focused concerns at the same time so you can **avoid** two separate visits.

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### *Sometimes Preventative Care and Medical Care Cross Paths*

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### EXAMPLE

If you present to your physician's office for your annual preventative care exam and you were diagnosed with diabetes, high cholesterol and/or hypothyroidism years ago, then some of your labs ordered during the course of the exam may not be considered preventative. These tests are only considered preventative if they are truly not being ordered as means of monitoring a current or previously diagnosed illness (Illinois State Medical Society, [www.isms.org](http://www.isms.org)).

If a person has symptoms or anything that looks unusual on exam a portion of their visit may be considered **diagnostic**.