

September is National Cholesterol Education Month ~ The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage of cardiovascular screening blood tests for the early detection of cardiovascular disease or abnormalities associated with an elevated risk of heart disease and stroke.

This benefit presents an excellent opportunity for health care professionals to help their eligible Medicare patients check their cholesterol status, know their risk for heart disease and the steps they can take toward following a heart-healthy lifestyle that can lower their risk for heart disease and keep it down.

Medicare provides cardiovascular screening blood tests for all asymptomatic beneficiaries every 5 years. The beneficiary must have no apparent signs or symptoms of cardiovascular disease.

Covered screening tests include:

- Total Cholesterol Test
- Cholesterol Test for High-density Lipoproteins
- Triglycerides Test

Coverage of cardiovascular screening blood tests is provided as a Medicare Part B benefit. The beneficiary will pay nothing for the blood tests (there is no coinsurance or copayment and no deductible for this benefit).

IMPORTANT NOTE: The cardiovascular screening benefit covered by Medicare is a stand alone billable service separate from the Initial Preventive Physical Examination also known as the “Welcome to Medicare” visit and does not have to be obtained within the first six months of a beneficiary’s Medicare Part B coverage.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare’s coverage of cardiovascular screening blood tests, including coverage, coding, billing and reimbursement, please visit the following CMS website:
 - The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page
www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp#TopOfPage
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, please visit www.medicare.gov
- To learn more about National Cholesterol Education Month, please refer to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s 2007 National Cholesterol Education Month Kit
<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/cholmonth/>

Thank you for helping CMS ensure that all eligible people with Medicare take full advantage of this preventive screening service.