

## It's National Nutrition Month

CMS reminds healthcare professionals that March is National Nutrition Month® – a campaign focused on the importance of making informed food choices, and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Nutrition Month® with a focus on personalized healthy eating styles that take into account individual food preferences, lifestyle, cultural and ethnic traditions, and health concerns.

Nutrition-related health conditions are prevalent within the Medicare population. Twenty-eight percent of Medicare beneficiaries have diabetes and 15 percent have chronic kidney disease. More than 35 percent of American men and women are obese, and adult obesity is associated with a number of health conditions including heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.

*Medicare provides coverage for the following nutrition-related health services:*

- Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Obesity
  - Medicare provides coverage of IBT for Obesity. This coverage includes screening for obesity in adults using measurement of body mass index (BMI). For those beneficiaries that screen positive (whose BMI is equal to or greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) and meet certain requirements, IBT for obesity includes a dietary (nutritional) assessment, and intensive behavioral counseling and behavioral therapy to promote sustained weight loss through high intensity interventions on diet and exercise. This coverage includes one face-to-face visit every week for the first month; one face-to-face visit every other week for months 2-6; and one face-to-face visit every month for months 7-12, if the beneficiary meets the 3kg (6.6 lbs) weight loss requirement during the first 6 months.
- Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)
  - Medicare provides coverage of IBT for cardiovascular disease (referred to as a CVD risk reduction visit). The visit, which is covered once per year, consists of the following three components:
    - Encouraging aspirin use for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease when the benefits outweigh the risks for men age 45-79 years and women 55-79 years;
    - Screening for high blood pressure in adults age 18 years and older; and
    - Intensive behavioral counseling to promote a healthy diet for adults with hyperlipidemia, hypertension, advancing age, and other known risk factors for cardiovascular and diet-related chronic disease.
- Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT)
  - Medicare provides coverage of MNT *for certain beneficiaries diagnosed with diabetes and/or renal disease\**, when referred by the treating physician and provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional.
- Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT)
  - Medicare provides coverage of DSMT services for beneficiaries who have been diagnosed with diabetes and received an order from the physician or qualified nonphysician practitioner treating the beneficiary for diabetes. DSMT services are intended to educate beneficiaries in the successful self-management of diabetes. A qualified DSMT program includes among other services, education about nutrition, diet, and exercise.

- Annual Wellness Visit
  - The Annual Wellness Visit, which is covered once per year presents an opportunity for health professionals to provide eligible beneficiaries that have had Medicare Part B for longer than 12 months with personalized health advice and referrals, as appropriate, for health education, preventive screening and counseling services, and community-based lifestyle interventions. This visit focuses on reducing health risks and promoting self-management and wellness, including weight loss, physical activity, smoking cessation, fall prevention, and nutrition.

#### *What Can You Do?*

You can help your Medicare patients live healthier lives in 2013 by encouraging the use of the above Medicare-covered services. These services present excellent opportunities to begin a dialogue with your Medicare patients about their dietary habits and how their eating habits may affect their health, and make recommendations for preventive services that can help them reach their nutritional and dietary goals. Remember to provide any appropriate written referrals.

#### *More Information for Healthcare Professionals:*

- [MLN Preventive Services Educational Products for Health Professionals](#)
- [CMS Prevention Web Site](#)
- [National Diabetes Education Program](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)
- [Million Hearts™ Campaign Web Site](#)
- [National Nutrition Month® Web Site](#)

*\* Note: for the purpose of MNT services, renal disease means chronic renal insufficiency (a reduction in renal function not severe enough to require dialysis or transplantation [Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) 13-50 ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>]) or the medical condition of a beneficiary who has been discharged from the hospital after a successful renal transplant for up to 36 months post-transplant.*