

May 13-19, 2007 is National Women's Health Week

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to invite you to join us in recognizing National Women's Health Week. This annual health observance is a perfect opportunity to help women learn how they can live longer, better, healthier lives through the promotion of disease prevention, early detection and lifestyle modifications that support a healthier life.

Heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, influenza, pneumonia, and other chronic diseases have a significant impact on the health and well being of women in the US. Yet the reality is, many of these diseases can be prevented and complications can be reduced. Medicare now provides coverage for a full range of preventive services and screenings that can help women stay healthy, detect disease early and manage conditions to reduce complications. Medicare-covered preventive benefits include:

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening (new as of January 2007)

Adult Immunizations

- Flu
- Pneumococcal
- Hepatitis B.

Cancer Screenings

- Breast (mammogram and clinical breast exam)
- Cervical & Vaginal (Pap test and pelvic exam)
- Colorectal

Cardiovascular Screening

Diabetes Screening

Diabetes Supplies

Diabetes Self-management Training

Glaucoma Screening

Initial Preventive Physical Exam ("Welcome to Medicare" Physical Exam)

Medical Nutrition Therapy (beneficiaries with diabetes or renal disease)

Smoking and Tobacco-Use Cessation Counseling

Although Medicare is now helping to pay for more preventive benefits, many women with Medicare are not yet taking full advantage of them, leaving significant gaps in prevention. Statistics show that while Medicare beneficiaries visit their physician on an average of six or more times a year, many of them are not aware of their risk for disease or even that they may already have a condition that preventive services are intended to detect. With your help we can begin to close the prevention gap.

How Can You Help? As a trusted source, your recommendation is the most important factor in increasing women's use of Medicare preventive benefits. We need your help to ensure that women with Medicare are aware of these covered benefits and that they are encouraged to take advantage of the preventive services for which they may be eligible.

For Women Patients New to Medicare ~ When appropriate, provide the *Welcome to Medicare* physical exam. This one time exam, which must be received within the first 6 months of a beneficiary's Medicare Part B effective date, is an excellent opportunity to orient new women patients to Medicare, assess risk factors for disease, discuss lifestyle modifications that support a healthy lifestyle and may reduce the complication of disease, and encourage utilization of preventive benefits through referral for appropriate services. Remember to follow-up with patients on all screening results, even negative ones — every one likes to hear good news.

For Established Patients ~ Remember to talk with your patients about their risk for disease and the importance and value of prevention, detection, early treatment, and lifestyle modifications. Encourage appropriate utilization of preventive services for which they may be eligible and provide follow-up on all screening results and continue to promote a prevention-oriented lifestyle.

Working together we can begin to:

- educate women about steps they can take to prevent disease;
- increase awareness of risk factor for developing disease while promoting prevention, early detection and treatment of disease affecting women's health;
- prevent and reduce serious complications of disease through better disease management;
- reduce mortality for many diseases effecting women;
- improve the health and quality of life of women;
- ensure that women with Medicare take advantage of preventive benefits they may be eligible for, before they become sick; and
- ultimately save health care dollars.

For More Information

For more information about Medicare-covered preventive services and screenings, including coverage, coding and billing guidelines, please visit the following CMS website:

- The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp#TopOfPage

For products to share with your Medicare patients go to www.medicare.gov

To learn more about National Women's Health Week, please visit <http://www.4woman.gov/whw/>

Thank you for joining with CMS to spread the message about prevention, early detection and treatment.