

November is American Diabetes Month ~ The prevalence of diabetes is a growing health concern in the United States. Approximately 20.8 million people, or 7.0% of the population, have diabetes. It is estimated that 20.9% of people age 60 years or older have diabetes. Left undiagnosed, diabetes can lead to severe complications such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, and lower limb amputation as well as premature death. Millions of people have diabetes and don't know it. However, with early detection and treatment people with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complications.

The good news is that scientific evidence now shows that treatment of diabetes with diet, physical activity, and new medicines can prevent or delay much of the illness and complications associated with diabetes. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would like to take this opportunity to remind health care professionals that Medicare provides coverage of diabetes screening tests, for beneficiaries at risk for diabetes or those diagnosed with pre-diabetes.

The diabetes screening benefit covered by Medicare can help improve the quality of life for Medicare beneficiaries by preventing more severe health conditions that can occur without proper treatment from undiagnosed or untreated diabetes.

Coverage includes the following diabetes screening tests:

- A fasting blood glucose test, **and**
- A post-glucose challenge test (an oral glucose tolerance test with a glucose challenge of 75 grams of glucose for non-pregnant adults), **or**
- A 2-hour post-glucose challenge test alone.

In addition to the diabetes screening service, Medicare also provides coverage for diabetes self management training, medical nutrition therapy, certain diabetes supplies, and glaucoma screenings for eligible beneficiaries.

We Need Your Help

CMS needs your help in ensuring that people with Medicare are assessed for and informed about their risk factors for diabetes or pre-diabetes, and that those who are eligible take full advantage of the diabetes screening benefit and all preventive services covered by Medicare for which they may be eligible.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare's coverage of diabetes screening services, diabetes self management training, medical nutrition therapy, diabetes supplies, and glaucoma screening:
 - See Special Edition *MLN Matters* article SE0660
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0660.pdf>
 - Visit the CMS website: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/medicare.asp>
- CMS has also developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staff become familiar with coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement for all preventive services covered by Medicare.
 - The MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page ~ provides descriptions and ordering information for all provider specific educational products related to preventive services. The web page is located at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website.
- For products to share with your Medicare patients, visit www.medicare.gov on the Web.
- For more information about American Diabetes Month, please visit www.diabetes.org/home.jsp

Thank you for joining with CMS during American Diabetes Month to ensure that people with Medicare learn more about diabetes and their risk factors for the disease and that they take full advantage of the diabetes screening services and all other Medicare-covered preventive services and screenings for which they may be eligible.

FLU SHOT REMINDER

Flu season is here! Do you know why Medicare patients don't get the flu shot? The reasons they give vary and include: it causes the flu; they don't think they need it; it has side effects; it's not effective; they didn't think about it; they don't think they're at risk; their doctor didn't recommend it; and they don't like needles. The fact is seniors are at greater risk. On average 36,000 people in the U.S. die each year from influenza and complications of the virus. Greater than 90 percent of deaths occur in persons 65 years of age and older. You can help your Medicare patients overcome these barriers through patient education. Talk to your Medicare patients about the importance of getting their annual flu shot. – And don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. **Protect yourself, your patients, and your family and friends. Get Your Flu Shot.** Remember - Influenza vaccination is a covered Part B benefit. Note that influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. For more information about Medicare's coverage of adult immunizations and educational resources, go to CMS's website:
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0667.pdf> .
