

March is National Nutrition Month® – Please join with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in promoting increased awareness of nutrition, healthful eating and the medical nutrition therapy (MNT) benefit covered by Medicare. Approximately 8.6 million Americans¹ at least 60 years or older are diagnosed with diabetes or acute renal failure. MNT provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional may result in improved diabetes and renal disease management and other health outcomes and may help delay disease progression.

Medicare Coverage

Medicare provides coverage of medical nutrition therapy (MNT) for beneficiaries diagnosed with diabetes or renal disease (except for those receiving dialysis) when provided by a registered dietitian or nutrition professional who meets the provider qualifications requirement, or a “grandfathered” dietitian or nutritionist who was licensed or certified as of December 21, 2000. A referral by the beneficiary’s treating physician indicating a diagnosis of diabetes or renal disease is required. Medicare provides coverage for 3 hours of MNT in the first year and 2 hours in subsequent years.

What Can You Do?

As a trusted source of health care information, your patients rely on their physician’s or other health care professional’s recommendations. CMS requests your help to ensure that all eligible people with Medicare take full advantage of the medical nutrition therapy benefit. Talk with your eligible Medicare patients about the benefits of managing diabetes and renal disease through MNT and encourage them to make an appointment with a registered dietitian or nutrition professional qualified to provide MNT services covered by Medicare.

For More Information

- For more information about Medicare’s coverage of MNT services, visit the CMS website <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicalNutritionTherapy/>
- CMS has also developed a variety of educational products and resources to help health care professionals and their staffs 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.
 - The CMS website provides information for each preventive service covered by Medicare. Go to www.cms.hhs.gov, select “Medicare” and scroll down to the “Prevention” heading.
- For information to share with your Medicare patients, visit www.medicare.gov on the Web.
- For more information about National Nutrition Month®, please visit <http://www.eatright.org>.

It’s Not Too Late to Give and Get the Flu Shot!

The peak of flu season typically occurs between late December and March; however, flu season can last until May. **Protect yourself, your patients, and your family and friends by getting and giving the flu shot.** Each office visit presents an opportunity for you to talk with your patients about the importance of getting an annual flu shot and a lifetime pneumococcal vaccination. Remember - influenza and pneumococcal vaccination and their administration are covered Part B benefits. Note that influenza and pneumococcal vaccines are NOT Part D covered drugs. For more information about Medicare’s coverage of adult immunizations and educational resources, go to CMS’ website: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0667.pdf> .

¹ The United States Renal Data System and National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse; <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/statistics>.