Regence BlueShield serves select counties in the state of Washington and is an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
Dear Member,

Your health journey depends on many factors, such as gender, age, family health history, diet, overall fitness level and current health conditions. Navigating your health journey can be a daunting task, especially if you’re trying to make those decisions alone.

Regence BlueShield developed “Your Passport 2 Health” as a guide to help you navigate your health care journey. Your passport contains important health information about screenings for various health conditions that could help save your life.

Each description of an exam or screening lists who is eligible for a service, what risk factors are involved for the condition and how often it should be done. Take your passport to your doctor’s office and review it together so that you get the screenings that are recommended for you. You can use the convenient fold-out chart located inside the back cover to record your appointment dates and track your screening results.

Best of health,
Regence BlueShield
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Overall Wellness and Quality of Life ........................................... 4

- Health and Safety Issues
  - Lowering your risk of falling .................... 5
  - Using medication safely .......................... 6
  - Maintaining bladder control .................... 7

- Preventive Care
  - “Welcome to Medicare”
    - Preventive Visit .................................. 8
  - Annual Wellness Visit ............................ 9
  - Bone mass measurements ....................... 9
  - Breast cancer screening (mammograms) .......... 10
  - Cardiovascular disease & behavioral therapy .... 11
  - Colorectal cancer screening ...................... 11
  - Diabetes screening & management ................ 12
  - Obesity screening & counseling ............... 14
  - Vaccinations ...................................... 14

- Other Important Screenings
  - Alcohol misuse screening & counseling .......... 15
  - Cervical & vaginal cancer screening ............. 16
  - Depression screening ............................. 16
  - Smoking & tobacco cessation counseling ......... 16

- Preventive Services Checklist .................. 17

- Medication Tracker ................................. 19
Overall Wellness & Quality of Life

Preventive care, such as vaccinations and screenings, can help delay or prevent many diseases. There are also many day-to-day choices you can make to stay healthy, live longer, and maintain or improve your quality of life.

**Exercise**—Get 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity, five or six days a week (talk to your doctor about what exercise program is right for you).

**Eating well**—Eat a variety of healthy foods, like fruits, vegetables, protein (like meat, fish, or beans) and whole grains. Limit the amount of saturated fat you eat.

**Maintaining a healthy weight**—Watch your portion sizes, and try to balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn by exercising.

**Sleeping well**—Most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep. Set a bedtime routine and limit the time you spend using electronic devices or watching TV.

**Not smoking**—If you smoke, talk with your doctor about getting help to quit.

**Managing stress**—Plan your time and prioritize what’s important. Relax with deep breathing or meditation. Talk to friends and family or see a mental health professional for additional help if you need it.
Health & Safety Issues

Lowering your risk of falling

More than one in three older adults will fall each year, leading to broken bones, lower mobility and other health problems.

Lower your risk of falling by:

- Incorporating activities and exercises that focus on balance and leg strength

- Making your home safer by adding stair railings, removing tripping hazards, keeping stairs and walking paths free of obstacles, and removing or securing small rugs

- Wearing non-slip shoes, not slippers or socks

- Asking your doctor to review your medicines to identify those that could make you dizzy or sleepy

- Getting your vision checked every year
Using medication safely

The wrong medication or combination of medications can lead to side effects or other health problems. Ask your doctor if you are taking any high-risk medications and discuss if there is an alternative medication you could take.

Other medication safety advice:

• Keep a list of your medications, including vitamins or other supplements (you can find a handy Medication Tracker on page 19).
• Keep your doctor updated on the medications you’re taking.
• Follow directions carefully, and if you don’t understand them, ask your doctor, or pharmacist to explain them to you.
• Talk to your doctor about any allergies or side effects of the medications you’re taking.
• Pay attention to the color and shape of your pills. If they look different at refill, ask your pharmacist to double-check them.
• Throw away expired or unused prescription medicines.
Maintaining bladder control

Bladder control problems may develop in women during pregnancy or after childbirth or menopause. Some older men may experience urinary incontinence after prostate surgery. Other causes include pelvic trauma and spinal cord damage. Caffeine or some prescription and over-the-counter medications may also contribute.

Less than half the people with bladder control problems ever discuss it with their doctor, leaving it untreated. Be sure to discuss with your doctor if you think you may have bladder control problems.

Other bladder control advice:

• Drink smaller amounts of fluid throughout the day.

• Avoid bladder-irritating foods such as acidic fruits, spicy foods, tomato-based products, artificial sweeteners and chocolate.

• Try eliminating caffeine or alcohol for a week to see if it helps.

• Do Kegel exercises. Squeeze your pelvic floor as if you’re trying to stop the flow of urine or hold in gas.
Preventive Care

Even with a healthy and active lifestyle, you may still have risk factors (such as genetic predisposition) that increase your chances of becoming sick or developing certain diseases. If you’re not sure if you’re at risk, talk to your doctor.

“Welcome to Medicare” Preventive Visit

Who is eligible?
All people with Medicare.

How often?
This visit is covered only one time, and you must have the visit within the first 12 months of your Medicare eligibility.

Your provider will:
- Record your medical history
- Record your height, weight and blood pressure
- Calculate your body mass index
- Give you a simple vision test
- Review your potential risk for depression
- Offer to talk with you about creating advance directives
Annual Wellness Visit

Who is eligible?
All people with Medicare.

How often?
Once every 12 months. You will need to wait 12 months before you can get your first yearly “Wellness” exam if you had the “Welcome to Medicare” visit during your first year of Medicare eligibility.

Your provider will:
- Review your medical and family history
- Update a list of current providers and prescriptions
- Check your height, weight, and blood pressure
- Detect any cognitive impairment
- Develop a screening schedule for preventive services
- Recommend treatment options

Bone mass measurements
Osteoporosis is a disease in which your bones become weak and brittle. There are no symptoms of osteoporosis and you may not know you have it until you break a bone. In general, the lower your bone density, the higher your risk for a fracture.
Who is eligible?
Certain people whose doctors say they’re at risk for osteoporosis, and who have one of these medical conditions:

- A woman whose health care provider says she’s estrogen-deficient and at risk for osteoporosis, based on her medical history and other findings
- A person with vertebral abnormalities as demonstrated by an X-ray
- A person receiving steroid treatments
- A person with hyperparathyroidism
- A person taking an osteoporosis drug

How often is it covered?
Once every 24 months (more often if medically necessary), or within six months of a fracture.

Breast cancer screening (mammograms)
Breast cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in women and the second leading cause of cancer death in women in the United States. Every woman is at risk, and this risk increases with age. Breast cancer usually can be successfully treated when found early.

Who is eligible?
Women age 40 and older. You could be higher risk if you:

- Had breast cancer in the past
- Have a family history of breast cancer
- Had your first baby after age 30
- Never had a baby
How often?
Every 12 months

**Cardiovascular screenings & therapy**
This screening checks your cholesterol and other blood fat levels. High cholesterol increases your risk for heart attack and stroke.

A cardiovascular disease risk reduction visit includes:
- Encouraging aspirin use if appropriate
- Screening for high blood pressure
- Counseling to promote a healthy diet

**Who is eligible?**
All people with Medicare.

**How often?**
Screenings (tests for cholesterol, lipid and triglyceride levels) are covered once every five years or every year, if at risk.

**Colorectal cancer screening**
Your doctor uses colorectal cancer screening tests to help find precancerous polyps (growths in the colon) so they can be removed before they become cancerous.

**Who is eligible?**
All people with Medicare 50 and older, but there’s no minimum age for having a screening colonoscopy.
How often?

• *Screening fecal occult blood test*—Once every 12 months

• *Screening flexible sigmoidoscopy*—Once every 48 months after the last flexible sigmoidoscopy or barium enema, or 120 months after a previous screening colonoscopy

• *Screening colonoscopy*—Once every 120 months (high risk every 24 months) or 48 months after a previous flexible sigmoidoscopy

• *Screening barium enema*—Once every 48 months (high risk every 24 months) when used instead of sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy

**Diabetes screening & management**

Diabetes is a medical condition in which your body doesn’t make enough insulin, or has a reduced response to insulin. Diabetes causes your blood sugar to be too high because insulin is needed to use sugar properly. A high blood sugar level isn’t good for your health. Talk with your doctor to see if you need a blood screening test to check for diabetes for people at risk.
Diabetes screening  
(Fasting blood glucose test)

Who is eligible?  
People who are at risk for diabetes.

How often?  
Up to two diabetes screenings per year, based on the results of your screening tests.

Who’s at risk?  
You’re considered at high risk if you have high blood pressure, dyslipidemia (history of abnormal cholesterol and triglyceride levels), obesity or a history of high blood sugar (glucose).

Medicare also covers these tests if you answer “yes” to two or more of the following questions:

• Are you 65 or older?
• Are you overweight?
• Do you have a family history of diabetes (parents, brothers or sisters)?
• Do you have a history of gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy), or have you ever had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds?

Diabetes self-management training

For people with diabetes, Medicare covers educational training to help manage their diabetes and prevent complications. You must have a written order from a doctor or other health care provider.
Obesity screening & counseling

Who is eligible?
All people with Medicare may be screened for obesity. Counseling is covered for anyone found to have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more.

How often?
If you have a BMI of 30 or more, you are covered for intensive obesity counseling conducted in a primary care setting.

- One face-to-face visit each week for the first month
- One face-to-face visit every other week for months 2–6
- One face-to-face visit every month for months 7–12, if you lose 6.6 pounds during months 1–6

Vaccinations
Flu, pneumococcal (pneumonia) infections and hepatitis B can be life-threatening to an older person. All people 65 and older should get flu and pneumococcal shots. People who are under 65 but have chronic illness, including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant), should get a flu shot. People at medium to high risk for hepatitis B should get hepatitis B shots.
**Who is eligible?**
All people with Medicare are eligible for flu and pneumococcal shots. Certain people at medium or high risk for hepatitis B are eligible for hepatitis B shots.

**How often?**
Flu shots are given once per flu season. Most people need a pneumococcal shot only once in their lifetime. Three shots are needed for complete protection against hepatitis B. Check with your doctor about when to get hepatitis B shots if you qualify to get them.

» **Other Important Screenings**

There are many other important preventive screenings that could save your life. Please talk to your doctor about scheduling the screenings that apply to you and your health risks.

**Alcohol misuse screening & counseling**

**Who is eligible?**
Adults who use alcohol but don’t meet the medical criteria for alcohol dependency.

**How often?**
One alcohol misuse screening per year; up to four counseling sessions per year from a qualified primary care doctor in a primary care setting.
Cervical & vaginal cancer screening

Who is eligible?
All women with Medicare.

How often?
Pap test and pelvic exam once every 24 months, or once every 12 months for women at high risk, and for women of child-bearing age who have had an exam that indicated cancer or other abnormalities in the past three years.

Depression screening

Who is eligible?
All people with Medicare.

How often?
One depression screening per year; screening must be done in a primary care setting.

Smoking & tobacco cessation counseling

Who is eligible?
All people with Medicare who use tobacco.

How often?
Medicare will cover up to eight face-to-face visits during a 12-month period. These visits must be provided by a qualified primary care doctor or practitioner in a primary care setting.
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Regence BlueShield is a Medicare Advantage plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Regence BlueShield depends on contract renewal. The benefit information provided is a brief summary, not a complete description of benefits. For more information contact the plan. Limitations, copayments, and restrictions may apply. Benefits, premiums, and/or copayments/coinsurance may change on January 1 of each year.

Source: Your Guide to Medicare’s Preventive Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, February 2013

For more information, please call the number listed on the back of your member identification card or visit us at www.regence.com/medicare.

TTY users call 711