

# What is the difference between a preventive visit and an office visit?



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We would like to help you understand the difference between an office visit (acute visit) and a preventive visit (annual physical). This is especially important when we submit a bill to your insurance company and can affect your out of pocket costs. This will help you get the right service and help us serve your needs as best we can.

## Preventive Visit (Annual Physical)

- Well defined by the insurance company as a current health assessment of your general health, lifestyle, and well-being without discussing current medication problems and complaints.
- Based on your health assessment your provider will make recommendations regarding disease prevention and health promotion that may include, age appropriate immunizations, cancer screenings, lab work, and lifestyle changes.
- Ongoing chronic medical problems and medication refills can be discussed as long as the condition is stable and does not require a change in treatment or additional tests.
- Your preventive visit and most of the preventive labs and tests are provided to you free of charge!

## Office Visit (Acute Visit)

- An appointment to discuss new or existing problems. These office visits are also called "acute" or "follow-up" visits. This will be the focus of the visit.
- Your provider may then prescribe medication, order additional testing like lab work or X-rays, refer you to a specialist or discuss other treatment options or lifestyle changes.
- Depending on your insurance benefits, an office visit will result in out of pocket costs to you such as a copay or deductible.
- A preventive visit can often be added to your office visit or acute visit with no out of pocket costs!

## Can one appointment be both a preventive visit and an office visit?

Commonly, one appointment can include both types of visits. If this is the case, your provider will submit a charge for both a preventive visit and an office visit. If your preventive visit includes consultation or treatment for a specific condition, your insurance provider requests that we report these additional medical services to them. This would mean that you would be responsible for any copays or deductibles associated with an office visit or acute visit.

## How does this affect you?

While combining a preventive visit and an office visit will save you time by eliminating an extra appointment, it may also affect your costs. Providers must bill your visit based on both the reason you initially scheduled the appointment and what is done during the appointment. For this reason, it's important to remember that when you see your provider for a preventive visit, something more than a general evaluation could cost extra, but this should not discourage you to combine both visits. We find that this experience is more satisfying for you, the patient, when you combine these visits together.

**Call or ask us to schedule your preventive visit now!**

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