

Physical Exams... Important Patient Information

The traditional Physical Exam (sometimes referred to as an “Annual Exam”) is defined as a “Periodic Comprehensive Preventive Medicine Visit” by insurance companies. All insurance companies have specific rules as to what is covered during this exam. The following is a description of what can be billed as a Periodic Comprehensive Preventive Medicine Visit:

- *EVALUATION/REEVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL INCLUDING AN AGE AND GENDER APPROPRIATE HISTORY AND EXAMINATION*
 - * What we do depends on the age and gender of the patient...
 - * We ask many questions about what is going on, what problem(s) the patient may have had in the past...
 - * We ask about family history...
 - * We conduct an examination of the entire body, as age appropriate.

- *COUNSELLING/ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE/RISK FACTOR REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS*
 - * We give advice on various topics to maintain health...
 - * We advice on likely dangers or likely life changes that are imminent...
 - * If there is something in the lifestyle that is unhealthy, we make recommendations on how to make the lifestyle LESS dangerous to the health of the patient.

- *ORDERING OF APPROPRIATE IMMUNIZATIONS*
 - * We order shots/vaccines according to need.

- *ORDERING LABORATORY/DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES*
 - * We order blood work, urine tests, speech/hearing tests, chest x-rays, mammograms, sigmoidoscopies, colonoscopies and tests for osteoporosis, as age/need appropriate.

Please see next page for additional information...

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Your insurance company pays for your visit according to clearly stated expectations about what happened at your visit. They can request your medical records (from us) of the visit to decide whether what occurred constitutes a “physical” or not. For some insurances, payment will be determined by whether or not what occurred on that particular day was or was not a physical.

Some insurances don’t pay (cover) for *any* physical, others pay for it yearly to the specific date of the last physical and others may only pay for a physical once every 5 years. In addition, for some, there may or may not be a co-pay required depending on whether the visit was a physical.

The purpose of a physical can be stated as “to keep you healthy and identify any dangers and/or conditions you may know/not know about. It is strictly a *preventive* medical visit; it is not used to identify/treat current problems you might be experiencing (such as pain, dizziness, needed medication adjustments, sinus infections etc.)”. If you are experiencing a particular problem(s) that needs to be addressed in the next few days or weeks, then you need to schedule for an office visit, not a physical.

If in the past 10 years, I have sometimes performed additional work, such as making medication changes/adjustments or problem-solving a particular problem during a physical exam, I am unable to do so anymore.

We realize that surprises do come up in the midst of a physical and we can change gears and orientation at the time of the visit. The sooner you bring up any problem(s) to the secretary, medical assistant or doctor, the better we can serve your particular needs. This will result in a most-favorable outcome for all. Thank you for your understanding in this matter!

Sincerely,

Dr. Gina & Staff of Mary’s Family Medicine