



Topic of the Month:
Medicare Preventive Care Benefits

This week in Marci . . . Volume 8, Issue 35: Week of August 31, 2009

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Dear Marci,

My mother's vision has recently gotten worse. She wants to find out if she has glaucoma. Will Medicare pay for a screening?

– Jennifer (Steilacoom, Washington)

Click on the blue, underlined [hyperlinks](#) for related information available through Medicare Interactive!

Dear Jennifer,

While Medicare generally won't cover [routine eye care](#), it will pay for some eye care services to detect or treat chronic eye conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts.

Medicare covers 80 percent of the cost of an annual glaucoma screening for people who are at high risk for the disease and who have met their [Part B deductible](#). Medicare will also help pay for surgery to help repair eye function for people who have glaucoma or cataracts; eye glasses or contacts if you have had cataract surgery during which an intraocular lens was placed in your eye; and an eye exam to diagnose potential vision problems.

➔ **To find out more about Medicare coverage of**



Spotlight on Resources

- Learn more about Medicare's coverage of preventive care services on [Medicare Interactive](#).
- For information about services and resources for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#).
- For free one-on-one counseling and assistance with Medicare and related issues, contact your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#).
- For help getting screened for benefit

glaucoma screenings, go to [Medicare Interactive](#). You can also see a full list of [preventive care benefits](#) that Medicare covers.

–*Marci*



Looking for past Dear Marci Answers? Have other Medicare questions? Find your answers with Medicare Interactive (MI), an independent, public resource of the Medicare Rights Center. MI offers expert information and advice on Medicare. [Visit Medicare Interactive today!](#)

Do you need individual counseling? Call the Medicare Rights Center's consumer hotline at **800-333-4114**, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. A Medicare counselor will be happy to answer your question.

You can also call your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#) for personal counseling on Medicare benefits, rights and options. Call [Social Security](#) (800-772-1213) for questions about enrolling in Medicare or applying for Extra Help!

Feel free to [send comments](#) about *Dear Marci* or suggestions about topics you would like *Dear Marci* to cover.

Health Tip of the Week

There are little-known [superfoods](#), natural foods that are especially good for your body because they're packed with nutrients, that you should try incorporating into your diet.

Dietitians and nutritionists say you can give your body a boost by eating foods such as [kamut](#) (a wheat alternative found in some pastas, breads, cereals and crackers); [tempeh](#) (made from fermented soybeans) and [chia seeds](#) (whole grains with omega-3 fatty acids).

Other, more common foods experts recommend are avocado, prunes, beets and pumpkin.

These foods can be part of a healthy daily diet, which should include two cups of fruit, two and a half cups of vegetables, three or more ounces of whole-grain products and three cups of low-fat milk or equivalent milk products, according to [USDA Dietary Guidelines](#) for a 2,000 calorie diet.

You can read more about superfoods in this feature on the web site of the [Chicago Tribune](#).

programs available to older adults with limited incomes, visit [Benefits Check Up](#).

- View ratings and reviews of care and housing options for older adults at the [seniorDECISION](#) website.
- For state-by-state legal information about Medicare, visit [ElderLaw Answers](#).

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The Medicare Rights Center's Professional Hotline

Do you help people with Medicare? Where do you turn to for help? Call the Professional Hotline, a national service offered by the Medicare Rights Center to support people serving the Medicare population. Dial 877-794-3570 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time for accurate, up-to-date information and ongoing technical support.

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Are you in need of Medicare information?

Check out the Medicare Rights Center's FREE educational web seminars to learn more about how Medicare works and what resources are available to you.

View of recordings of web seminars and learn about

Survey Says . . .

A study released this month by lung experts at [Johns Hopkins](#) and six other U.S. medical centers says that severe sleep apnea raises the chances of dying by up to 46 percent among middle-aged and elderly people.

The widespread sleeping disorder is caused by an airway in the upper neck collapsing during sleep, which interrupts breathing and makes blood oxygen levels drop.

Just 11 minutes a night of oxygen deprivation caused by sleep apnea—during which blood oxygen levels fell below 90 percent—doubled the death rate in men, researchers found. There was not enough data to draw the same conclusion for women.

The ongoing Sleep Health Study started with about 6,441 people, ages 40 through 70, who had varying levels of sleep apnea or none at all. About 1,047 participants died since the study began.

Apnea can be treated with a continuous positive airway pressure device (CPAP).

You can read a summary of the study in the [Public Library of Science, Medicine](#). To find out about Medicare's coverage of durable medical equipment such as CPAPs, go to [Medicare Interactive](#).

upcoming events on [MedicareRights.org](#).

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Dear Marci is a weekly e-newsletter designed to keep you—people with Medicare, social workers, health care providers and other professionals—in the loop about health care benefits, rights and options for older Americans and people with disabilities. *Dear Marci* is a free service of the [Medicare Rights Center](#).

The Medicare Rights Center (MRC) is the largest independent source of Medicare information and assistance in the United States. Founded in 1989, MRC helps older adults and people with disabilities get high-quality, affordable health care.

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