



What is the difference between a physical and an office visit?

We would like to help our patients understand the difference between an office visit and a physical. This is especially important when we submit a bill to your insurance company for that visit. This will help you get the right service and help us serve your needs as best we can. When scheduling an appointment, our office tries to figure out how much time you need with the provider and whether you need a physical or an office visit.

Most of the time patients are seen at office visits. An “office visit” is an appointment time to discuss new or existing problems. The questions and exam will focus on the problems discussed. This may include prescribing medications, or ordering additional tests like lab or x-ray, in-office procedures like and EKG, referrals to specialists, or discussing other treatment options.

A “physical”, “preventative health exam” or “wellness exam” is a thorough review of your general well-being. The provider will review your medical problems, perform a complete physical examination and make recommendations concerning your health. This may include general recommendations regarding diet and exercise, age appropriate immunizations and cancer screening exams such as a pap test, prostate exam or breast exam and screening lab work. Ongoing chronic medical problems and medication refills can be addressed as long as the condition is stable and does not require a significant change in treatment or additional tests.

Occasionally, you may be seen for both a physical and an office visit on the same day. This means that you satisfy the requirements for both types of visits during one appointment. For example, if you scheduled a physical but also were discussing an additional problem that requires an additional evaluation and the evaluation took place during that appointment and addressed the problem separately from the physical, then you would be billed for both a physical and an office visit during the same appointment.

We hope this information is helpful. We want to provide you with the highest quality medical care possible. If you need further information regarding this, please contact our office.

Tarter Family Medicine
1560 North Crestmont Drive, Suite A
Meridian, ID 83642
Phone: 1-208-650-4888
Fax: 1-208-650-4892
Email: tarterfamilymed@gmail.com