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# Age Spots by Jackie Dover - An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

AUGUST 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## **An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away**

When I was a young 20 something I had an old clunker of a car which had been passed down to me from my older sister. It wasn't fancy but it got me from point A to point B, which is all I needed at that time. I learned a lot about cars; how to check the fluids, change a tire and fix little dents and even cracked windows. I babied that car for as long as possible. Eventually I traded that car in for a younger, newer model. Since we can't change ourselves in for a more updated model we need to do our best to do as much "upkeep" as we can and preventive services can help.

Medicare has put a lot of focus on preventive services in the last few years. Preventive services are screenings to look for disease before a patient has symptoms of a disease. Why is it important to find out if you have a problem before you have symptoms? Because finding problems early can save not only money but also lives. Using the old car idea, it is much cheaper to get regular oil changes than it is to replace an engine.

Medicare will cover a variety of preventive services at \$0 out of pocket cost. Some services are available to everyone; some are covered only if you have certain risk factors. Aging Matters has check lists and guides to the preventive services so you can see what might be appropriate for you.

If you have had Medicare for longer than 12 months you are eligible for a yearly "Wellness" visit. This is not a physical as most of us expect it to be. It is an

assessment of your current health, a review of your medications, family history and a review of what risk factors and treatment options available to you. This is an opportunity for you and possibly schedule you for more testing, if appropriate.

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Other preventive services that are available include.

- annual flu shot
- Pneumococcal shot
- prostate screening
- glaucoma tests
- colorectal cancer screening
- tobacco use cessation counseling

For more information on preventive services or if you would like a guide to services, please call Aging Matters 1-800-392-8771.

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