

UNDERSTANDING

Medicare



Your employer does not administer Medicare and Human Resources cannot provide Medicare advice. We encourage you to go to [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) for more information as it provides a step-by-step scenario-based guide for everything you need to know. You can also contact Social Security at 800-772-1213 for more information.

General

Medicare is the federal government health insurance program that provides health care coverage. It is funded by Social Security and Medicare taxes you pay on your income. There are four parts to Medicare: Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D.

You are eligible for Medicare generally when you turn 65. If you are working when you turn 65 – you have 8 months to sign up for Part B after you leave your employer. Otherwise, you will be penalized and cannot sign up until there is an open enrollment period. You sign up for Medicare through the Social Security Administration.

Medicare is an individual insurance, so spouses cannot be on the same Medicare plan together. If your spouse is eligible for Medicare – your spouse can get their own Medicare plan. If your spouse is under 65:

- Your spouse may continue coverage through your employer plan if you keep working and keep the employer coverage.
- Your employer may offer COBRA coverage for your spouse if you retire.
- Your spouse may choose to buy individual health insurance until he or she turns 65.

Documentation Required for Medicare

- Original Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Copy of your W-2 form.

What is the difference between Medicare & Medicaid?

Medicare is federal health insurance for anyone age 65 and older, and some people under 65 with certain disabilities or conditions. Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides health coverage for some people with limited income and resources. Medicaid offers benefits, like nursing home care, personal care services, and assistance paying for Medicare premiums and other costs. If you qualify, you can have both Medicare and Medicaid.

Who is eligible for Medicare?

Anyone who is 65 or older or under 65 and receiving Social Security Disability Insurance for 24 months.

When do I get Medicare?

You only need to sign up for Part A and Part B once. Each year, you can choose which way you get your health coverage and add or switch drug coverage as well.

There are two different ways you get Medicare based on your current situation:

1. **Before 65:** You are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B if you are getting retirement or disability benefits from Social Security at least 4 months before turning 65.
2. **After 65:** You will need to sign up for Medicare if you are waiting until you are 65 or older to enroll in Medicare. Depending on if you are working and if you have health coverage through your employer, you might not want to sign up for Medicare as soon as you become eligible.

When you first sign up for Medicare and during certain times of the year, you can choose which way to get your Medicare coverage. There are 2 main ways: Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage (aka Part C).

Original Medicare

- Original Medicare includes Part A and Part B.
- You can join a separate Medicare drug plan to get Medicare drug coverage (Part D).
- You can use any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare, anywhere in the U.S.
- To help pay your out-of-pocket costs in Original Medicare (like your 20% coinsurance), you can also buy supplemental coverage, like Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap), or have coverage from a former employer or union, or Medicaid.

Medicare Advantage (also known as Part C)

- Medicare Advantage is a Medicare-approved plan from a private company that offers an alternative to Original Medicare for your health and drug coverage. These “bundled” plans include Part A, Part B, and usually Part D.
- In most cases, you'll need to use doctors who are in the plan's network.
- Plans may have lower out-of-pocket costs than Original Medicare.
- Plans may offer some extra benefits that Original Medicare doesn't cover – like vision, hearing, and dental services.

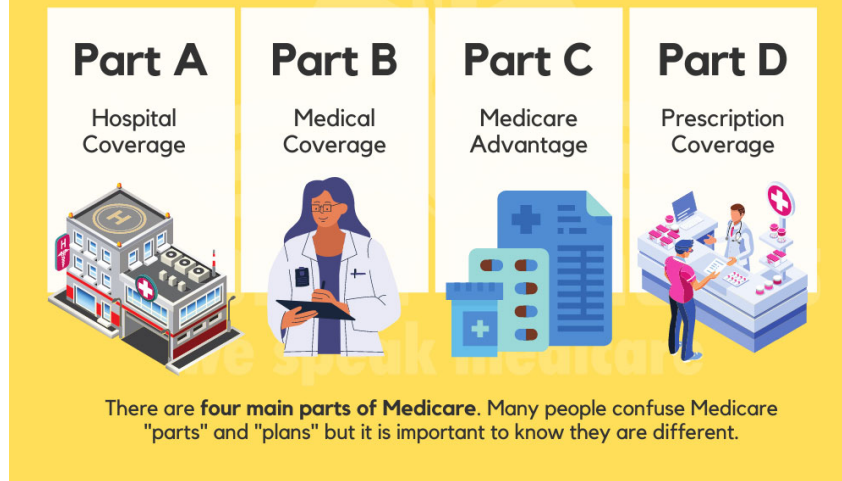
What are the Parts of Medicare?

There are 4 parts of Medicare: **Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D.** You can find the premiums, deductibles, and costs for services here:

<https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/medicare-basics/what-does-medicare-cost>

The Parts of Medicare

by: Boomer Benefits



Part A: Hospital Insurance - Covers most medically necessary hospital inpatient care, skilled nursing facility care, home health care, and hospice care.

Part B: Medical Insurance - covers most medically necessary doctors' services, preventive care (vaccines, wellness visits), hospital outpatient care, durable medical equipment, lab tests, x-rays, mental health services, and some health care and ambulance services.

Part C: Medicare Advantage – a private Medicare plan offered by companies that contract with the government.

Part D: Prescription Drugs – covers the cost of prescription drugs. You can join a Medicare drug plan in addition to “Original Medicare” or by joining the “Medicare Advantage Plan” with drug coverage.

[When do I enroll in Medicare?](#)

There are many different times to sign up for Medicare based on your situation.

The most common is when you have health insurance now through your employer and are still working.

Part A – When you turn 65, sign up for Part A as there is no premium to pay.

Part B – You have an 8-month special enrollment period to sign up for Part B from the time you stop working. If you do not sign up within this window, you will pay a penalty and be without coverage for many months. If you want Medicare coverage to start when your employer health insurance ends, you need to sign up for Part B the month before you plan to retire. Your coverage will start the month after Social Security gets your completed forms. You'll need to fill out an extra form showing you had employer health coverage while you were working.

If you get COBRA from your employer – don't wait until COBRA coverage ends to sign up for Part B. Getting COBRA does not extend your limited time to sign up for Medicare.

Part D – You can sign up during your initial enrollment period which is 3 months before you turn 65, the month you turn 65, and 3 months after you turn 65 for a total of 7 months. If you do not sign up during this time and wait until a later date - you will pay a penalty. You must have Part A and Part B to sign up so if you are working, contact your employer to see if you have “credible prescription drug coverage”. If you do, you will not pay a penalty when you sign up for Part D in your 8 month window after retirement. You can also sign up during Open Enrollment each year for Part D (but will pay a penalty if you did not sign up during your initial enrollment window).

[When does Medicare start?](#)

The date your coverage starts depends on which month you sign up. Coverage always starts on the first of the month. Part A: Starts the month you turn 65. Part B: If you sign up the month you turn 65 your coverage starts on the 1st of the month after you sign up.

About 2 weeks after you sign up, Medicare will mail you a welcome package with your Medicare card.

[How do I sign up for Medicare?](#)

Contact Social Security to sign up for Medicare Part A and Part B. Medicare provides your coverage, but you’ll sign up through Social Security because they need to see if you're eligible for Medicare, including whether you (or another qualifying person) paid Medicare taxes long enough to get Part A without having to pay a monthly premium (usually 10 years of work). They also process requests to sign up for Medicare Part B.

[Where do I sign up for Medicare?](#)

- Online (at Social Security) – It’s the easiest and fastest way to sign up and get any financial help you may need. (You’ll need to create your secure *my* Social Security account to sign up for Medicare or apply for benefits.)
1. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213.