

MEDICARE *Choices* MADE EASY!



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If you will have Medicare in the near future or if you're already enrolled, it's good to understand your insurance choices. Making good choices can lead to better health and financial security. The truth is, for most people, Medicare A & B by itself is not enough. There are gaps in coverage that Medicare leaves you to you to fill. So how do you do you learn about your insurance choices and keep your sanity along the way? Well, it starts right here. This guide is short & sweet and after reading it you'll be headed in the right direction. Let's get started.

Medicare A & B

Before learning about how to make the most of Medicare, let's start with the foundation. **Medicare is health insurance for people 65 and older and people under 65 with certain disabilities. It primarily consists of 2 parts; A & B.** Part A covers you if you are hospitalized and Part B covers you for outpatient services like doctors visits. Medicare Part A is usually free because you've paid for it in full during your working lifetime. The monthly cost of Part B can vary, mainly depending on when you enroll and your income. The monthly premium that most people pay for Part B in 2019 is \$135.50 per month.

In addition to a monthly cost, there are out of pocket costs you can incur when you receive medical care. These are costs such as deductibles, copays, and co-insurance that are typical with medical insurance. Because Medicare does not set annual limits to these costs, it's clear that it's not intended to be had alone. It is this reason most people need to supplement their Medicare with some kind of extra coverage.

The # 1 reason to supplement Medicare is that it does not set limits on your annual out of pocket costs. This could leave you without care or in financial hardship.

Medicare Supplements

There are 2 ways to make the most out of your Medicare and get more coverage. The first is having a **Medicare Supplement, also known as Medigap Insurance.** Medicare Supplements are insurance policies that help you pay for out of pocket medical costs. These are the costs we referred to earlier; Copays, deductibles, and co-insurance that Medicare requires you to pay as your share. By helping you pay for theses costs, Medicare Supplements are designed to give you financial security and better healthcare access.



Medicare Supplements are offered by a variety of private insurance companies. Each plan is represented by a letter, for example; Plan F, G, and N are 3 of the most popular plans available today. The letter that represents a plan means certain benefits and coverage, which are the same at any insurance company that offers it. This helps make it easier for you to compare the same coverage at the different companies. Although the coverage is the same for any letter plan at different insurers, the monthly premiums may not be.



- Medicare Supplements are best for those who are willing to pay a monthly premium to have the most coverage with Medicare.
- The most popular plans can limit your out of pocket medical expenses to between \$0 and only \$185 per year in 2019, for Medicare covered services.
- Many find Medicare Supplement premiums to be very affordable for the benefits provided. The premium you pay is in addition to your Medicare Part B premium.

Contact us for a quote and more details on plans available in your area.

Medicare Advantage Plans

Medicare Advantage Plans are the second way to get more coverage with Medicare. Also known as "Part C", these are health insurance programs provided by private insurance carriers that have a contract with Medicare. Medicare Advantage plans do not supplement your Medicare, they become it. Advantage Plans include the same basic benefits as Medicare A & B, but can also include extra benefits. Extra benefits vary among the different plans but often include; A cap on your annual medical costs, prescription coverage, dental, vision, and fitness club memberships.



Medicare Advantage Plans usually have networks of doctors and there are 2 main types of plans; HMO's and PPO'S. PPO's have doctor networks but allow you to get care at any Medicare doctor. PPO's also do not require referrals from your primary care physician. HMO Plans require that you only use doctors under the plan, except in cases of emergency. There are, however, benefits to these restrictions. HMO's are known for providing many extra benefits and low copays for medical care. When considering an Advantage Plan for coverage, you should review it's "Summary of Benefits" so you understand the details

Medicare Advantage plans are best for those who want the most benefits while paying little or no extra Monthly premium. There are many good Medicare Advantage Plan options for between \$0 and \$50 per month in Texas. Premiums are the same for everyone enrolled in a particular plan, regardless of your medical & prescription needs. Medicare Advantage monthly premiums are in addition to your monthly premium for Part B.

Part D Prescription Coverage

Part D is prescription coverage for medications that you fill at the pharmacy. You can have Part D as a single "stand alone" plan or included with a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C). If you keep Traditional Medicare and get a Medicare Supplement; you will need a stand alone Part D plan. Part D is provided by private insurers who have a contract with Medicare. The monthly premiums, coverage, and costs vary with the different plans, however, they will each follow guidance set by Medicare.





Part D Plans have a monthly premium and may have deductibles & copays when you fill your medications. For any particular plan, monthly premiums are the same for everyone and are not based on your health or the number of medications you take. When evaluating your options, you should consider how plans cover your current and possible future medication needs. Review the Summary of Benefits and list of covered medications (formulary) for any plans you are researching.

Conclusion

Not unlike a strainer, Medicare by itself has holes. If you pour water into your strainer, it will leak out. If you have medical claims with Medicare, money will leak out. Who's left cleaning up the mess? You could be. That is, of course, unless you're covered by a Medicare Supplement or Advantage Plan. Medicare Supplements pick up where Medicare stops, helping you pay for medical expenses. With Medicare Supplements you pay an extra premium to have the security of predictably low medical bills. Medicare Advantage plans are a great way to get extra coverage and pay little or no extra premium. They can provide limits on your medical copays and extra benefits like prescription, dental, and vision. So, which is right for you? We hope by now you have a good idea. In any case, it's a good time to take the next step and get more details on your individual options.

This guide is for educational purposes. Always review your insurance policy, outline of coverage, or summary of benefits for details. Coverage and estimated premiums mentioned in this guide are not guaranteed. Plans are subject to eligibility and underwriting at the time of enrollment.

Take The Next Step!

Contact your agent below by phone or email with your questions and to get more details on insurance plans available to you in your area. We help you compare several quality plans and insurance providers to match you with your best coverage.

Information is always provided with no cost, obligation, or hassles.

About Your Agent Ben Rodriguez

Throughout his career as a Licensed Insurance Agent, Ben Rodriguez has advised hundreds of Medicare recipients. Since obtaining his degree in Business Finance from Kent State University, Ben has acquired nearly 15 years of experience in financial services and insurance. Having a close relationship with his parents and grandparents has made him especially in tune to the needs of boomers and seniors. Ben is known for his professionalism with a personal touch.



Phone 512-537-7847 direct line
Email: ben@lonestarmedicare.com



MEDICARE *Cheatsheet*

This cheat sheet organizes the main topics and frequently asked questions surrounding Medicare. You can read each section then click on the website link to be directed to a web page for more details. You can also type in the exact web page address into your web browser to visit the particular page. Tiny URL is a web page address shortening service. It is used here to make it easier to type in website addresses.

WHAT IS MEDICARE AND WHAT DOES IT COVER? Medicare is federal health insurance for people 65 and older, on disability, and people with End Stage Renal Disease. Medicare consists of 4 Parts; Part A Hospital Insurance, Part B Medical & Doctor, Part C, & Part D prescription insurance.

For more information visit;
<https://tinyurl.com/yajxwvdz>

WHAT COSTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH MEDICARE? Medicare has consists of premiums and medical cost sharing. A premium is the cost you pay to have the coverage, typically monthly or quarterly. Cost sharing is what you pay when you have medical care such as deductibles and copays. Most people do not pay a premium for Part A, however, there is a charge for Part B. The Part B premium can change each year, depending when you sign up. Individuals with high incomes may pay more than the standard premium.

For more information visit; <https://tinyurl.com/y8pf3nj4>

Check your eligibility and estimate premiums: <https://www.medicare.gov/eligibilitypremiumcalc>

WHEN AM I ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE? You are eligible for Medicare; 1. The month you turn age 65. 2. Have disability for 24 months. 3. When you have End Stage Renal Disease or you have ALS and get disability. This is called your Initial Enrollment Period. You are also eligible for Medicare if you are 65 or older and deferred enrollment because you had other insurance, such as through an employer. This is called a Special Enrollment Period.

For more information visit;
<https://tinyurl.com/y83pbwf3>

WHAT OTHER COVERAGE CAN I HAVE WITH MEDICARE? There are two ways to receive your benefits; Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage (also known as Part C). If you have Original Medicare you can also purchase a Medicare Supplement policy (also known as Medigap) and a Part D prescription plan.

For more information visit;
<https://tinyurl.com/y9aebemh>

WHEN SHOULD I SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE? If you are receiving Social Security payments at least 4 months prior to turning 65, you are automatically enrolled and don't need to do anything. If you receive disability benefits you are automatically enrolled after 24 months or sooner for certain conditions. If you are not automatically enrolled should apply 3 months prior to the month you turn 65.

For more information visit;
<https://tinyurl.com/ybyfppjy>

HOW DO I ENROLL IN MEDICARE?

There are 3 ways to enroll; 1. Apply Online 2. Call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 and schedule an appointment to enroll by phone. 3. Enroll In Person - You can walk in and apply for call the 800 number to schedule an appointment at the local office.

Apply Online <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/> Find your local social security office: <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>



MEDICARE *Checklist* FOR TURNING 65

10 - 12 MONTHS FROM MEDICARE ELIGIBILITY

- ☐ Learn about Medicare, it's different parts, and costs.
- ☐ Check on your eligibility for Medicare.

7 - 9 MONTHS FROM MEDICARE

- ☐ Start determining if you'll be signing up for just Part A or both A & B. Most people sign up for both unless you have other insurance.
- ☐ Learn about the 2 ways you can have your Medicare; Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage (Part C).
- ☐ Learn about Medicare Supplement (Medigap) insurance and Part D.

4 - 6 MONTHS FROM MEDICARE

- ☐ Get information on coverage choices available to you for Medicare Supplement, Medicare Advantage, and Part D prescription in your area. You can call us at 855-625-7633 or email us at ben@lonestarmedicare.com to request the info.
- ☐ You are eligible to enroll in a Medicare Supplement Policy 6 months prior to starting Medicare. This is known as your Medigap Initial Enrollment Period.

1 - 3 MONTHS FROM MEDICARE

- ☐ Determine whether you'll need to apply for Medicare or if you'll be automatically enrolled. If necessary, apply to enroll in Medicare. Remember most will need to enroll in both A & B unless you will have other creditable insurance.
- ☐ If you've decided to do so, you are now eligible to enroll in a Part D Prescription Plan or Part C / Medicare Advantage Plan.
- ☐ If you have decided to pick up a Medigap / Medicare Supplement Plan and haven't done so, apply for coverage.