



CENTER FOR
**HEALTH CARE
RIGHTS**



2024 Medicare Benefits and Costs

- + Who is eligible for Medicare
- + Medicare Part A and B benefits and costs
- + 2024 Medicare Part A and B premiums
- + How Medicare coordinates with employer health insurance
- + When to enroll in Medicare

Need information about Medicare?
Call Center for Health Care Rights at 800-434-0222
or visit www.HealthCareRights.org

The Center for Health Care Rights (CHCR) is a California nonprofit organization that provides free information and help with Medicare. CHCR is the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) for Los Angeles County. HICAP can be reached statewide at 800-434-0222.

What is Medicare?

Medicare is a national health insurance program for people age 65 and older and people under the age of 65 who have a permanent disability.

What does Medicare cover?

Medicare has 3 parts:



Part A Hospital Insurance pays for hospital services, skilled nursing facility services, hospice and home health.



Part B Medical Insurance pays for doctor services and other outpatient medical care.



Part D Prescription Drug Benefit pays for prescription drugs.

Medicare does **not** cover:

Dental care, hearing aids, eyeglasses, or personal care services at home or in a nursing home

Who is eligible for Medicare?

People age 65 or older who:

- Are U.S. citizens, or permanent U.S. residents who have lived in the U.S. continuously for five years prior to applying.

People under age 65 who:

- Have received Social Security Disability benefits for 2 years; or
- Are eligible for Social Security Disability benefits and have ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) or End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

When do I enroll in Medicare ?

Initial Enrollment Period — When you first become eligible for Medicare



This is a **7 month** period. It starts 3 months before your month of eligibility and ends 3 months later.

Example: John will be eligible for Medicare when he turns age 65 in June. His Initial Enrollment Period starts March 1 and ends September 30.

General Enrollment Period — January 1 to March 31 of every year

If you missed your Initial Enrollment Period, you can enroll during this period. Your Medicare benefits will start the first day of the following month after enrollment.

Special Enrollment Period — When your employer insurance stops

If you or your spouse are working and have employer group health plan coverage, you may be able to delay your Medicare enrollment. When your employer health plan coverage ends, you will have an **8-month** special enrollment period to enroll in Medicare with no late enrollment penalty.

You may qualify for a special enrollment period if either of these apply:

- You are 65 or older and you have group health coverage;
- You are under 65 and your employer has 100 or more employees.

However, the size of your or your spouse's employer determines whether Medicare or your employer group health plan is the primary insurance coverage. If you delay your Medicare enrollment, your employer health plan will continue as your primary health insurance coverage as long as the employer has at least 20 employees (100+ if you are under 65).

If you enroll in Medicare before your employer health plan coverage ends, Medicare will typically be your secondary health insurance. It is a good idea to confirm with your benefits department whether your group health plan will continue to be your primary insurance coverage.

How do I apply for Medicare?

-  Apply online at the Social Security website www.ssa.gov
-  Call the Social Security Administration at **800-772-1213**.
-  Visit a local Social Security office.

2024 Medicare Part A premiums, benefits and copayments

2024 Medicare Part A premiums

Most people do not pay for Medicare Part A. If you have earned 40 or more work quarters, you pay no premium for Medicare Part A hospital insurance. You earn work quarters when you (or your spouse) have paid Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes for at least 10 years (or 40 quarters) while working.

Number of earned work quarters	Part A premium cost
You have less than 30 earned work quarters	\$505 per month
You have 30–39 earned work quarters	\$278 per month

If you do not have enough earned work quarters, you can purchase Medicare Part A if you are:

- Age 65 or older;
- A U.S. Citizen, or
- A legal resident and have lived in the U.S for at least 5 continuous years.

Medicare Part A benefits

Medicare coverage of hospital and skilled nursing facility days is based on a **benefit period**.

What is a benefit period?

- A benefit period begins when you are admitted to the hospital;
- The benefit period ends when you have been out of the hospital or have not received skilled care in a skilled nursing facility for 60 consecutive days.



Hospital Care

Medicare covers up to 90 days of hospital care in a benefit period. If you use all 90 days, you can use your lifetime reserve days. You have 60 lifetime reserve days to use over your lifetime.



Skilled Care in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

Medicare pays for up to 100 days of skilled nursing care in a benefit period if you meet all of these requirements:

- ✓ You go to a Medicare–contracted skilled nursing facility after a 3–day inpatient hospital stay;
- ✓ Your doctor orders your skilled nursing facility stay;
- ✓ You need skilled nursing and/or therapy (physical, speech, and occupational) services at least 5 days a week.

Most people who use the Medicare SNF benefit are receiving rehabilitation services.



Home Health Care

Medicare pays for home health if you meet all of these requirements:

- ✓ Due to an illness or injury, you have difficulty leaving your home;
- ✓ You need skilled nursing or therapy (physical, speech, and occupational) on a part time basis;
- ✓ The home health provider contracts with Medicare;
- ✓ Your doctor has prescribed Medicare home health services for you.



Hospice Care

This Medicare benefit is for people who have a life–threatening illness and are not expected to live longer than 6 months. The purpose of hospice care is to provide comfort and manage pain.

Medicare patients who participate in a hospice program do not receive treatment for their life–threatening illness.

Medicare hospice services include: palliative care by doctors and nurses, medical equipment, physical, speech and occupational therapy, respite care and grief counseling.

2024 Medicare Part A Copayments and Deductibles

Part A Benefits	Time Frame	Your Out-of-Pocket Cost
Hospital Benefit	Days 1-60	\$1,632 hospital deductible
	Days 61-90	\$408 per day
	Days 91-150 Lifetime reserve days	\$816 per day
Skilled Nursing Facility	Days 1-20	\$0
	Days 21-100	\$204 per day

2024 Medicare Part B medical insurance premiums, benefits and copayments

2024 Standard Part B premium: **\$174.70 per month**

You pay a higher Part B monthly premium if you are single with an annual income of \$103,000 or more. If you are married, you pay a higher Part B premium if you have a joint income of \$206,000 or more.

Part B late enrollment penalty

Medicare may charge you a monthly penalty if you do not sign up for Part B at the right time. The penalty is 10% for each 12-month period that you delayed your enrollment into Part B. You pay the penalty for the rest of your life.

2024 Medicare Part B benefits include:

- Physician services
- Ambulance services
- Mental health services
- Preventive care (example – flu shot)
- Outpatient therapy (physical, speech and occupational)
- X-rays and lab tests
- Diagnostic tests (example – MRI, CT scan)
- Medical equipment (example – wheelchair, walker, hospital bed)



2024 Medicare Part B out-of-pocket costs

\$240 annual Part B deductible

20% coinsurance

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Coverage

Medicare Part D pays for prescription drugs. **There are 2 types of Medicare Part D drug plans:**

- **Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs)** only provide prescription benefits;
- **Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans** provide prescription drug and medical care services. These plans provide all your Medicare A, B and D benefits. Also known as Medicare Part C.

For more information about Medicare Part D plans, see our 2024 Medicare Part D Drug Coverage factsheet.

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How do I close gaps in Medicare coverage?

Medicare does not cover 100% of your health expenses. It does not pay for dental care or custodial care at home or in a nursing home. Medicare also requires you to pay Medicare Part A and Part B copayments and deductibles. If you only have Medicare, consider the following insurance options:

Medicare Coverage Choices At-A-Glance

Step 1: Decide how you want to get your health care

OR

I want Original Medicare so that I can choose my Medicare doctors

Original Medicare

Part A Hospital Insurance
Part B Medical Insurance

Step 2: Enroll in a Part D plan if you want drug coverage

Part D Prescription Drug Plans

- Only provide drug coverage
- Do not affect your Medicare A & B benefits

Step 3: Get insurance that will cover your Part A and B copayments

Medi-Cal Health insurance for low income Californians. Provides additional benefits: dental, vision, long-term nursing home services,

OR

Medicare Supplement Insurance

Medigap policies are sold by private companies. They help pay Part A and B copayments.

I want a Medicare Advantage plan to reduce my out-of-pocket costs and get added benefits like dental and vision services

Medicare Advantage Plans (HMO or PPO)

- Managed care plans provide Medicare Part A, B and D benefits.
- **Medicare Advantage HMOs**
You assign your Medicare benefits to the plan and agree to use only Medicare Advantage plan providers.
- **Medicare Advantage PPOs**
You can see out of network medical providers but your out-of-pocket costs will be higher.