

TURNING 65 MEDICARE CHECKLIST

A Free Guide From The Bedrock Group

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INSIDE THE GUIDE

Turning 65 brings important Medicare decisions, and this guide helps you stay on track. Inside this free guide, you will find a timeline of when to enroll and how to avoid penalties, the difference between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage, what to prepare before signing up, and more. Whether you are still working or retired, this guide will provide you with the confidence to make informed decisions about Medicare.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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With over 20 years of experience in media, sales, and marketing, she now spends her days immersed in insurance industry trends, updates, and compliance, providing our clients with relevant topics.

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UNDERSTAND YOUR MEDICARE TIMELINE

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UNDERSTAND YOUR MEDICARE TIMELINE

As your 65th birthday approaches, it's important to understand the timeline for enrolling in Medicare. One of the most critical windows to be aware of is your **Initial Enrollment Period (IEP).** This is a 7-month window that begins three months before the month you turn 65, includes your birthday month, and continues for three months after. Taking action during this period helps you avoid delays in coverage and possible financial penalties.

Most people should enroll in Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance) during this time.

Part A is typically premium-free if you've worked and paid Medicare taxes for at least 10 years.

Part B has a monthly premium, but it's essential for covering doctor visits, outpatient care, and preventive services.



If you're still working or covered by a group health plan through your or your spouse's employer, your situation may be different. You may be able to delay Part B without penalty, but it's important to understand how your employer coverage coordinates with Medicare. In some cases, enrolling in Medicare at 65 is still recommended, especially if your employer has fewer than 25 employees.

Failing to enroll in Part B when you're first eligible and don't have other creditable coverage can lead to a permanent late enrollment penalty. This means you'll pay an extra 10% on your Part B premium for every 12-month period you were eligible but didn't enroll.

To ensure a smooth enrollment, gather key documents ahead of time. This may include your Social Security card, birth certificate, and current insurance information.

Having these ready can help you complete your application efficiently, whether you enroll online, by phone, or through a licensed Medicare advisor.

Understanding your timeline is the first and most important step in taking control of your Medicare journey — and avoiding costly missteps.

SECTION 2

DECIDE HOW YOU WANT YOUR COVERAGE

DECIDE HOW YOU WANT YOUR COVERAGE

Once you're enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B, the next big decision is how you want to receive your coverage. There are two main paths: **Original Medicare** or a **Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C)**.

Choosing the right option depends on your health needs, financial situation, and personal preferences.

Original Medicare includes Part A and Part B and allows you to see any doctor or specialist in the U.S. who accepts Medicare.

Many people who choose this route also purchase a Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plan to help cover costs like deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. In addition, you'll need to enroll in a separate Part D prescription drug plan, as drug coverage is not included in Original Medicare. The same applies to any additional benefits, such as vision, dental, and hearing coverage.

Medicare Advantage plans, on the other hand, are offered by private insurance companies approved by Medicare. These plans bundle your Part A and Part B coverage and usually include Part D prescription drug coverage, too.

Many Advantage plans also offer extra benefits such as dental, vision, hearing, fitness memberships, and more. These plans often have lower monthly premiums than a Medigap plan but may require you to use a network of providers and follow referral rules to see specialists.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer. If you prefer freedom to see any provider, travel frequently, or want more predictable out-of-pocket costs, Original Medicare with a Medigap plan might be your best fit. If you're looking for a cost-effective, all-in-one plan and don't mind using a provider network, Medicare Advantage could be a great option.



SECTION 3

REVIEW YOUR HEALTH, DOCTORS, AND MEDICATIONS

REVIEW YOUR HEALTH, DOCTORS, AND MEDS

Before choosing a Medicare plan, it's important to take a close look at your current health needs.

Not all Medicare plans cover the same services, providers, or prescriptions, so a little preparation now can save you money and headaches later.

Start by listing your current doctors and specialists, including any facilities or hospitals you regularly use.

Then check whether they accept Medicare — and if you're considering a Medicare Advantage plan, an advisor, like a licensed member of our team, can find out if they're in-network.

Provider networks vary by plan and location, so this step is critical if you want to keep your current healthcare team.



Next, gather a list of your prescription medications, including their dosages and the frequency of administration.

Medicare drug coverage (Part D or through an Advantage plan) varies by plan, so it's important to compare formularies — the list of drugs each plan covers.

You'll want to choose a plan that includes your medications at the lowest cost, through a pharmacy that's convenient for you.

You should consider how frequently you use healthcare services. Do you see specialists frequently? Do you expect to undergo surgeries or procedures in the near future? Travel out of state often? These factors can help determine whether a Medicare Advantage plan or a Medigap plan is better suited for your lifestyle.

By reviewing your doctors, prescriptions, and overall health status with a licensed advisor, you'll be better prepared to choose a Medicare plan that truly works for you, not just now, but in the years ahead.

SECTION 4

TAKE ACTION AND GET HELP

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TAKE ACTION AND GET HELP

Now that you understand your Medicare timeline, coverage options, and personal healthcare needs, it's time to take action. Enrolling in Medicare and choosing the right plan doesn't have to be overwhelming — especially when you have the right guidance and support.

Start by confirming when your Initial Enrollment Period begins and mark important deadlines on your calendar. If you've already decided which type of coverage works best for you — Original Medicare with a Medigap plan, or a Medicare Advantage plan — you can begin comparing plans in your area.

If you're not sure what to choose, don't worry — you don't have to do it alone. The Bedrock Group offers free, no-obligation consultations to help you review your options, compare plans, and ensure you don't miss any steps.

Our licensed advisors are here to answer your questions and guide you through enrollment from start to finish.

To avoid delays or mistakes, be sure to gather your necessary documents (like your Social Security card, a list of prescriptions, and provider information) and have them ready for your application.

Whether you enroll online through the Social Security Administration, over the phone, or with a trusted advisor, having your information prepared makes the process much smoother.

The final step? Reach out for help when you need it. Medicare can feel complex, but with expert support, you can enter your 65th year with peace of mind, knowing you've made the right decisions for your health and your future.



RESOURCES

At The Bedrock Group, our commitment is to ensuring a seamless transition into Medicare while guiding you through your retirement journey. You can explore any of the FREE resources provided below to help you reach your destination. Click any of the items below.

The Comprehensive Guide to Turning 65

More Guides, Checklists, + Cheatsheets

Seminars / Events

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READY TO MEET US?

We're here to guide you through it all—Medicare during retirement and life insurance too. We're happy to come to you. Schedule your appointment now, and we'll connect you with a licensed advisor in your area.

G O T O :

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