

NDSHIP

State Health Insurance Assistance Program
a service of the North Dakota Insurance Department

GETTING STARTED WITH MEDICARE

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MEDICARE

Health insurance for people:

- 65 and older
- Under 65 with certain disabilities, like ALS (also called Lou Gehrig's disease) without a waiting period
- Any age with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)

NOTE: To get Medicare you must be a U.S. citizen or lawfully present in the U.S. Must reside in the U.S. for 5 continuous years.

»» What agencies are responsible for Medicare?



Social Security

Enrolls most people in Medicare



Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Handles federal retirees' premiums



Railroad Retirement Board (RRB)

Enrolls both railroad retirees and active employees in Medicare



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

(CMS) Forms Medicare policy and administers Medicare coverage, benefits, and payments



What Are the Parts of Medicare?



Part A
(Hospital Insurance)



Part B
(Medical Insurance)



Part D
(Drug coverage)



Your Medicare Options

Original Medicare

Part A



Part B



You can add:

Part D



You can also add:

Supplemental coverage



This includes Medicare Supplement Insurance ([Medigap](#)). Or, you can use coverage from a former employer or union, or [Medicaid](#).

Medicare Advantage (also known as Part C)

Part A



Part B



Most plans include:

Part D



Some extra benefits

Some plans also include:

Lower out-of-pocket costs



Enrollment in Medicare Part A & B

Enrollment is automatic for people who get:

→ Social Security Benefits

- If you are receiving social security retirement when you turn 65
- If you are under 65 and have a disability and are receiving disability benefits for 24 months

→ RRB Benefits

When enrollment is not automatic:

→ Contact Social Security – Can do this up to 3 months prior to turning 65

→ If Retired from Railroad – Contact Railroad Retirement Board to enroll

NOTE: The age for Social Security Retirement benefits is age 62, however Medicare eligibility age is still age 65.



Your Medicare Card

- Shows the type of Medicare coverage (Part A and/or Part B) you have and the date your coverage started
- To accept Part B, keep your card (and carry it when you're away from home)
- To refuse Part B, follow the instructions in the "Get Ready for Medicare" package



Need a replacement card?

- Visit [Medicare.gov/account](https://www.Medicare.gov/account) to log into your secure Medicare account and print an official copy
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227); TTY 1-877-486-2048



When Can You Enroll into Medicare

If you don't already have Medicare:

- Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)
 - First eligible for Medicare (7 month period) – 3 months before turning 65 through 3 months after turning 65
- Special Enrollment Period (SEP)
 - Special circumstances – Ex: had group health insurance, move, change in Medicaid/LIS status, etc.
- General Enrollment Period (GEP)
 - Jan 1 – March 31 each year – coverage begins the month after enrollment

If you already have Medicare and want to change how you get your coverage:

- Open Enrollment Period (OEP)
 - Oct 15 – Dec 7 each year - Can make changes to Part D plans and Med Adv plans with new coverage effective Jan 1st
- Medicare Advantage OEP
 - Jan 1 – March 31 each year – Can make changes to your Med Adv plan only with coverage beginning the following month
- Special Enrollment Period (SEP)
 - Special circumstances – Ex: had group health insurance, move, change in Medicaid/LIS status, etc.



PART A (Hospital Insurance) Covers

Part A helps cover:

- Inpatient Care in a Hospital
- Inpatient Care in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)
 - Coverage after a related 3 day inpatient hospital stay
- Blood (inpatient)
- Hospice Care
- Home Health Care



Part A
Hospital Insurance



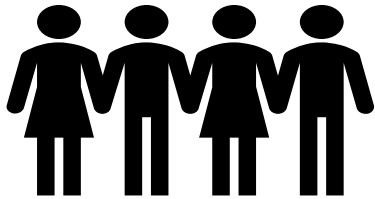
2024 Part A - What You Pay in Original Medicare

Hospital Inpatient Stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$1,632 deductible for each benefit period.▪ Days 1–60: \$0 coinsurance for each benefit period.▪ Days 61–90: \$408 coinsurance per day of each benefit period.▪ Days 91 and beyond: \$816 coinsurance per each “lifetime reserve day” after day 90 for each benefit period (up to 60 days over your lifetime).▪ Beyond lifetime reserve days: all costs.▪ NOTE: You pay for private-duty nursing, a television, or a phone in your room. You pay for a private room unless it’s medically necessary.
Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Days 1–20: \$0 for each benefit period.▪ Days 21–100: \$204 coinsurance per day for each benefit period.▪ Days 101 and beyond: all costs.
Home Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$0 for home health care services.▪ 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for Durable medical equipment (DME).
Hospice Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ \$0 for hospice care.▪ You may need to pay a copayment of no more than \$5 for each prescription drug and other similar products for pain relief and symptom control while you're at home. In the rare case your drug isn't covered by the hospice benefit, your hospice provider should contact your Medicare drug plan to see if it's covered under Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D).▪ You may need to pay 5% of the Medicare-approved amount for inpatient respite care.▪ Medicare doesn't cover room and board when you get hospice care in your home or another facility where you live (like a nursing home).
Blood	If hospital gets it from a blood bank at no charge, you have no charge

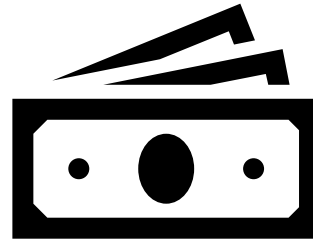


Do I Need to Sign Up for Part A?

Consider:



It's free for most people



You can pay for it if your work history isn't sufficient (there may be a penalty if you delay)



Talk to your benefits administrator if you (or your spouse) are actively working and covered by an employer plan

NOTE: To avoid Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax penalties, stop contributions to your Health Savings Account (HSA) up to 6 months before Medicare starts.



PART B (Medical Insurance) Covers

PART B helps cover:

- Doctors services
- Outpatient medical and surgical services and supplies
- Clinical lab tests
- Durable Medical Equipment (DME) (like walkers and wheelchairs)
- Diabetic testing supplies and equipment
- Preventive Services (like flu shots and a yearly wellness visit)
- Home health care
- Medically necessary outpatient PT, OT, ST services
- Outpatient mental health care services



2024 Part B Monthly Premiums

- Most people will pay \$174.70 per month for their Part B premium in 2024
- Your premium may be higher if you didn't choose Part B when you first became eligible or if your income exceeds a certain threshold called IRMAA

»» 2024 Part B – What You Pay in Original Medicare

Yearly Deductible	\$240 in 2024
Coinsurance for Part B Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 20% for most covered services, like doctor's services and some preventive services, if provider accepts assignment▪ \$0 for most preventive services▪ 20% for outpatient mental health services, and copayments for hospital outpatient services

NOTE: If you can't afford to pay these costs, there are programs that may help.



Do I Need to Keep or Sign Up For Part B?

Consider:

→ Most people pay a monthly premium

- Usually deducted from Social Security/RRB benefits
- Amount depends on income

→ Part B may supplement employer coverage

- Contact your benefits administrator to understand the impact to your employer plan
- If you don't have other coverage, declining Part B will mean you don't have full coverage



Medigap Policies

- Are sold by private insurance companies
- Fill in gaps in Original Medicare coverage, like copayments, coinsurance and deductibles
- Each standardized Medigap policy under the same plan letter:
 - Must offer the same basic benefits, no matter who sells it
 - May vary in costs
- North Dakota recognizes the federal rule of guaranteed issue for people aging into Medicare, but do not require insurance companies to sell to those under 65.



Medigap Plan Coverage

Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) plans

Benefits	A	B	C	D	F*	G*	K	L	M	N
Medicare Part A coinsurance and hospital costs (up to an additional 365 days after Medicare benefits are used)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Medicare Part B coinsurance or copayment	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	100%	100%***
Blood (first 3 pints)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	100%	100%
Part A hospice care coinsurance or copayment	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	100%	100%
Skilled nursing facility care coinsurance			100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	100%	100%
Part A deductible		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	75%	50%	100%
Part B deductible			100%		100%					
Part B excess charges					100%	100%				
Foreign travel emergency (up to plan limits)			80%	80%	80%	80%			80%	80%
							Out-of-pocket limit in 2024**	Out-of-pocket limit in 2024**		
							\$7,060	\$3,530		

* Plans F and G also offer a high-deductible plan in some states. With this option, you must pay for Medicare-covered costs (coinsurance, copayments, and deductibles) up to the deductible amount of \$2,490 in 2022 before your policy pays anything. (Plans C and F aren't available to people who were newly eligible for Medicare on or after January 1, 2020.)

** For Plans K and L, after you meet your out-of-pocket yearly limit and your yearly Part B deductible, the Medigap plan pays 100% of covered services for the rest of the calendar year.

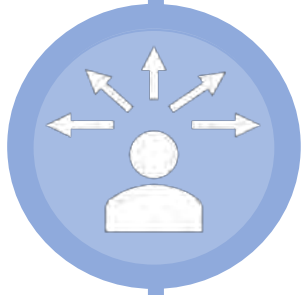
*** Plan N pays 100% of the Part B coinsurance, except for a copayment of up to \$20 for some office visits and up to a \$50 copayment for emergency room visits that don't result in inpatient admission.

»» When's the Best Time to Buy a Medigap Policy?

- Your Medigap Open Enrollment Period begins the month you're 65 or older AND enrolled in Part B
 - Last 6 months minimum
 - You have protections – companies MUST sell you a plan if you are in your OEP time frame (Guaranteed Issue)
- You can also buy a Medigap policy whenever a company agrees to sell you one
 - If later, there may be restrictions and medical underwriting



How to Buy a Medigap Policy



Decide on a
Medigap plan (A–N)



Shop around
(consider plan and price)



Find **insurance companies**
that sell Medigap policies by
calling
ND SHIP (888-575-6611)



Choose the insurance
company and the
Medigap policy



Apply for the policy



Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C)

Part A



Part B



Most plans include:

Part D



Some extra benefits

Some plans also include:

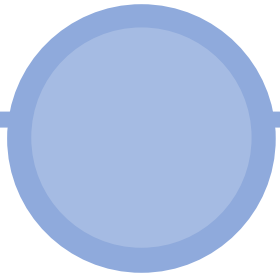
Lower out-of-pocket costs

- Another way to get your Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) coverage
- Offered by Medicare approved private companies that must follow rules set by Medicare
- Most Medicare Advantage Plans include drug coverage (Part D)
- In most cases, you'll need to use health care providers who participate in the plans network (some plans offer out-of-network coverage)



How Medicare Advantage Plans Work

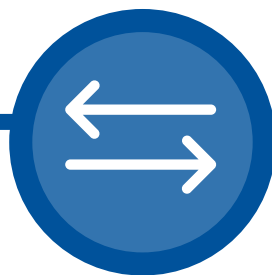
In a Medicare Advantage Plan, you:



Are still in Medicare with all **rights and protections**



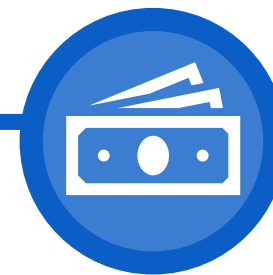
Still get **services** covered by Part A and Part B



Can't be **charged** more than Original Medicare for certain services, like chemotherapy, dialysis, and skilled nursing facility (SNF) care



May choose a plan that includes **drug coverage** and/or **extra benefits** like vision, dental or fitness and wellness benefits



Can be charged different **out-of-pocket costs**



When Can I Enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan?

What if I have Part A and enroll in Part B during a General Enrollment Period (GEP)?

You can enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan from April 1–June 30. Coverage begins the following month after you enroll.

If I'm new to Medicare and enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan, when can I make a change?

Within the first 3 months you have Medicare.

What if I enroll, then change my mind?

You can only make one change to another plan or to Original Medicare during the Medicare Advantage OEP, January 1–March 31. Coverage begins the 1st of the month after the plan gets your request.

Can I enroll during Medicare's yearly Open Enrollment Period (OEP)?

Yes. You can join, switch, or drop your plan during the OEP, October 15–December 7. Coverage begins on January 1.

Will I have a Special Enrollment Period (SEP)?

You might if you move out of your plan's service area, have or lose Medicaid or Extra Help, or move in or out of an institution.



How Do I Enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan?

- Find health and drug plans at [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.Medicare.gov/plan-compare)

- Once you understand the plan's rules and costs, here's how to join:
 - Visit the plan's website to see if you can join online
 - Call the plan you want to join (visit Medicare.gov to get your plan's contact information)
 - Call Medicare – 1-800-MEDICARE



Other Health Plans: Medicare Cost Plans

- You can join even if you only have Part B
- If you have Part A and Part B and go to a non-network provider:
 - Your services are covered under Original Medicare
 - You'll pay the Part A and Part B coinsurance and deductibles
- You can join anytime the plan accepts new members
- You can leave anytime and return to Original Medicare
- You can either get your Medicare drug coverage from the Cost Plan (if offered) or you can join a Medicare drug plan



Medicare Drug Coverage (Part D)

- An optional benefit available to all people with Medicare
- Run by private companies that contract with Medicare
- Provided through:
 - Medicare Stand Alone Drug companies
 - Medicare Advantage Plans with drug coverage
 - Some other Medicare health plans



How Part D Works

→ It's optional

- You can choose a plan and join
- May have a lifetime penalty if you join late

→ Plans have formularies (lists of covered drugs), which:

- Must include range of drugs in each category
- Are subject to change – you'll be notified

→ Your out of pocket costs may be less if you use a preferred pharmacy

→ If you have limited income and resources, you may get Extra Help



Part D Late Enrollment Penalty

- You may have to pay more if you wait to enroll, unless you have:
 - Creditable drug coverage
 - Extra Help
- You may owe the late penalty if there is a continuous period of 63 days or more after your Initial Enrollment Period in which you go without coverage
- You'll pay the penalty for as long as you have coverage
 - 1% for each full month eligible and without credible drug coverage
 - Multiply percentage by base beneficiary premium - \$34.70 in 2024
 - Amount changes every year



When to Enroll in a Part D Plan?

Can I join during my 7-month Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)?

Yes. It starts 3 months before the month you turn 65.

Can I sign up, switch, or join during the yearly Open Enrollment Period (OEP)?

Yes. It's from October 15–December 7. Coverage begins January 1.

→ May be able to join at other times

- Medicare Advantage Enrollment Period
- Special Enrollment Period



Choosing a Part D Plan

→ Compare plans by computer or phone

- Find health and drug plans by using the Medicare Plan Finder at [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare)
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE
- Call the ND SHIP Program – 888-575-6611

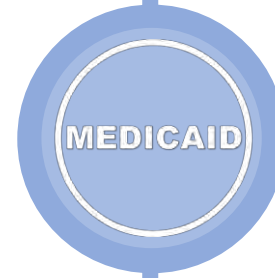
→ To join a Part D plan

- Enroll at [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare)
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE
- Enroll on the plans website or call the plan

»» Help for People with Limited Income & Resources



Medicare Savings Programs



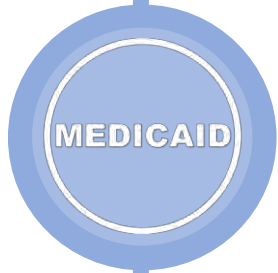
Medicaid



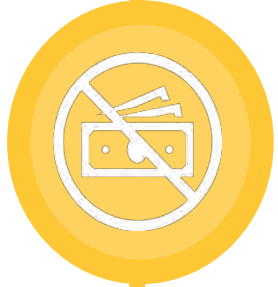
Extra Help



Key Points to Remember



Medicare is a health insurance program



Medicare doesn't cover all of your health care costs



You have choices in how you get coverage



Decisions affect the type of coverage you get



Certain decisions are time-sensitive



There are programs for people with limited income and resources



How ND SHIP Can Help You

- Provides Medicare beneficiaries with **free, unbiased** information to assist in making an informed decision about Medicare plan options and coverage
 - SHIP staff is comprised of 3 full time staff members and 34 volunteer counselors located across the State
- SHIP services are available to North Dakota residents at no-cost
- SHIP Program remains busy year-round but sees a noticeable peak during Medicare Part D Open Enrollment
- SHIP can also assist with:
 - Understanding paperwork, bills and statements
 - Claim and appeal process
 - Long term care plan issues



Helpful Resources

- Medicare - www.medicare.gov
- ND Medicaid – hhs.nd.gov
- Social Security – www.ssa.gov
- Extra Help – ssa.gov/medicare/part-d-extra-help
- Medicare Savings Program – hhs.nd.gov
- MSP Frequently Asked Questions - <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Health-And-Home-Care/Medicare-Savings-Program/Medicare-Savings-Program/FAQ>
- Medicare Interactive – www.medicareinteractive.org
- North Dakota Insurance Dept Website – insurance.nd.gov



Contact Us



888-575-6611 or 701-328-2440 (Option 1)



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