



## **MAKING MEDICARE MAKE SENSE**

*Answers to Some of the Most Commonly Asked Medicare Questions*

**Q: I'm going to turn 65 in a few months and will be signing up for Medicare. Are there any go-to resources I should look at to find enrollment information and learn more about program benefits?**

**A:** Welcome to Medicare! We're celebrating a milestone birthday, too: 50 years ago, on July 30, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the landmark amendment to the Social Security Act, which gave life to the Medicare program and forever changed the landscape of health care in America.

Medicare gives Americans, like you, access to quality, affordable health care that lets you live a happy, healthy and productive life. Today, about 55 million Americans depend on Medicare to cover 23 types of preventive services, including flu shots and diabetes screenings (some of these services are free, and you have a small copayment or pay the deductible for others). Medicare also covers hospital stays, lab tests and critical supplies (like wheelchairs), as well as prescription drugs.

Don't forget: As a new enrollee in Medicare, you're eligible for a "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit during the first 12 months you have coverage. For most people with Medicare there's no copay or deductible for this preventive visit. During your appointment, you and your doctor will review your medical and family history, assess your current health and prescriptions, and conduct tests and screenings to establish a baseline for personalized care.

You can find enrollment information and learn about program benefits, like the "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit, online. Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov), "like" our [Medicare.gov Facebook page](https://www.Medicare.gov), or follow our Twitter account at [@MedicareGov](https://twitter.com/MedicareGov) or by searching the hashtag #KeepingUSHealthy. We frequently update these official U.S. government online resources for Medicare with new information.

**Q: What's Medicare's Open Enrollment period? If I enrolled prior to this period, do I have to do anything?**

**A:** Medicare's Open Enrollment period, October 15 through December 7, is the one time of year when **all** people with Medicare can see what new benefits Medicare has to offer and make changes, if they want, to their coverage for the upcoming calendar year.

Your health care needs may change from year to year, and your health plan may change its benefits and costs each year, too. That's why it's important to **review your Medicare choices each fall**. If you compare your current plan to new options, you may find ways to lower some costs or find a plan that better suits your needs. Visit [Medicare.gov/find-a-plan](https://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan) to compare your current coverage with all of the options available in your area, and to enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.

You can also find the latest information about the plans available in your area in the *Medicare & You 2016* handbook, which is mailed to people with Medicare in late September; you can also find the handbook online at [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) at that time.

It's worth it to take the time to review and compare your health care plan options!

**Q: Can I speak with someone if I have questions or need help enrolling?**

**A:** Absolutely! Medicare and our partners are always ready to help. You, a relative, or someone you trust can call 1-800-MEDICARE (that's 1-800-633-4227) 24 hours every day. Trained representatives can help you find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

You can also get one-on-one help from the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) in your state. You'll find the number for your SHIP on the back page of your *Medicare & You* handbook, at [Medicare.gov/contacts](https://www.medicare.gov/contacts) or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

*This message is brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.*