

Your Medicare Coverage Choices

With Medicare, you can choose how you get your health and prescription drug coverage. Below are brief descriptions of your coverage choices. Section 2 has more details about these choices and information to help you decide.

Original Medicare (See pages 45–49.)

- Run by the Federal government.
- Provides your Part A and Part B coverage.
- You can join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to add drug coverage.
- You can buy a Medigap (Medicare Supplement Insurance) policy (sold by private insurance companies) to help fill the gaps in Part A and Part B coverage. See pages 75–76.

Medicare Advantage Plans (like an HMO or PPO) (See pages 50–60.)

- Run by private companies approved by Medicare.
- Provides your Part A and Part B coverage but can charge different amounts for certain services. May offer extra coverage and prescription drug coverage for an extra cost. **Costs for items and services vary by plan.**
- If you want drug coverage, you must get it through your plan (in most cases).
- You don't need a Medigap policy.

Other Medicare Health Plans (See pages 61–62 and 103–104.)

- Plans that aren't Medicare Advantage Plans but are still part of Medicare.
- Include Medicare Cost Plans, Demonstration/Pilot Programs, and Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).
- Some plans provide Part A and Part B coverage, and some also provide prescription drug coverage (Part D).

Note: You might also have health and/or prescription drug coverage from a former or current employer or union. See pages 72–73.

See page 43 for a chart that explains your Medicare coverage choices and the decisions you need to make.

Use These Steps to Help You Decide

Step 1

Decide if You Want

Original Medicare

OR a

Medicare Advantage Plan

(like an HMO or PPO)

Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance)

- Medicare provides this coverage.
- You have your choice of doctors, hospitals, and other providers.
- Generally, you pay **deductibles** and **coinsurance**.
- You usually pay a monthly **premium** for Part B.

See pages 45–49.

Step 2

Part C—Includes BOTH Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance)

- Private insurance companies approved by Medicare provide this coverage.
- In most plans, you need to use plan doctors, hospitals, and other providers or you pay more.
- You usually pay a monthly premium (in addition to your Part B premium) and a **copayment** for covered services.
- Costs, extra coverage, and rules vary by plan.

See pages 50–60.

Step 2

Decide If You Want Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D)

- If you want this coverage, you must choose and join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.
- These plans are run by private companies approved by Medicare.

See pages 63–71.

Step 3

- If you want this coverage, in most cases you must get it through your Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Most Medicare Advantage Plans include prescription drug coverage (Part D), usually for an extra cost.

See pages 54–56.

Decide If You Want Supplemental Coverage

You may want to get private coverage that fills gaps in Original Medicare coverage.

- You can choose to buy private supplemental coverage, like a Medigap (Medicare Supplement Insurance) policy.
- Costs vary by policy and company.
- Employers/unions may offer similar coverage.

See pages 75–76.

Note: If you join a Medicare Advantage Plan, you don't need a Medigap policy. If you already have a Medigap policy, you can't use it to pay for any expenses you have under the Medicare Advantage Plan. If you already have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can't be sold a Medigap policy. See page 57.

In addition to Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may be able to join other types of Medicare health plans (see pages 61–62). You may be able to save money or have other choices if you have limited income and resources (see pages 77–84). You may also have other coverage, like employer or union, military, or Veterans' benefits (see pages 72–73).