



Quick Facts about Medicare's Coverage for Prescription Drugs

Medicare offers prescription drug plans to help you pay for the prescriptions you need. For most people, joining when you are first eligible means you will pay a lower monthly premium. Waiting to join may mean paying a penalty.

Even if you don't use a lot of prescription drugs now, you should still consider joining a Medicare drug plan to make sure you have coverage for your future needs.

What do I need to know?

- To get Medicare prescription drug coverage, you must choose and join a Medicare drug plan.
- You can join a Medicare drug plan between November 15–December 31 each year. Your coverage will begin January 1 of the following year.
- If you join, your costs will vary depending on which plan you choose. In general, you may pay a monthly premium and a yearly deductible (up to the first \$295). You will also pay a share of your prescription drug costs, and your plan pays a share. Medicare helps pay for drugs up to a limit (\$2,700 in total) and once your total out-of-pocket costs for drugs reach \$4,350, you pay 5% of the costs and Medicare pays 95% of the costs for the rest of the year. The amounts shown are for 2009.
- Many people with limited income and resources will get extra help paying for their Medicare prescription drug coverage. People with the lowest incomes and resources will get the most help.



What if I already have prescription drug coverage?

If you already have prescription drug coverage through your Medicare health plan or other insurance, check with your current plan to see how it works with, or is affected by, Medicare prescription drug coverage.

Unless you have other drug coverage that is, on average, at least as good as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage, it's important for you to join a Medicare drug plan when you are first eligible.

How can I get more information?

You can look at the “Medicare & You” handbook, visit www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. For more information on extra help with prescription drug costs and how to apply, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or visit www.socialsecurity.gov. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.