

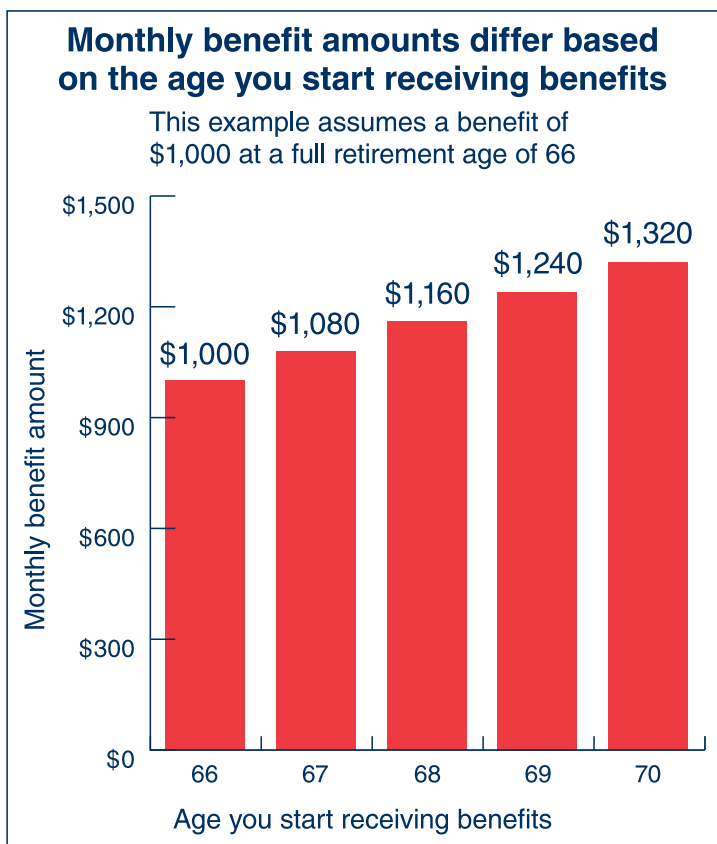


## When to start receiving retirement benefits

You're already receiving your Medicare benefits. At some point, you'll need to decide when to start receiving your Social Security retirement benefits. We hope the following information will help you in planning for this important decision.

If you were born from 1943 to 1954, your full retirement age is 66. If you choose to delay receiving your retirement benefit beyond full retirement age, we'll increase your benefit. Your benefit can increase as much as 8 percent a year up to age 70. Your benefits will no longer increase if you delay beyond age 70.

The graph below shows an example of how your decision can affect your monthly benefit amount.



You can use our online *Retirement Estimator* to see an estimate of your personal retirement benefit, and the effects of different retirement age decisions. We provide more information about the *Retirement Estimator* later in this fact sheet.

## Retirement may be longer than you think

The age you start receiving benefits can make a significant difference in your monthly benefit amount. You may need your monthly income for a long time, because more people are living longer. For example:

- The typical 65-year-old today will live to age 85;
- More than one in three 65-year-olds will live to age 90; and
- More than one in seven 65-year-olds will live to age 95.

For more information on life expectancy, go to our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/lifeexpectancy.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/lifeexpectancy.htm).

## Rules that can affect your survivor

If you're married, and die before your spouse, they can be eligible for a benefit based on your work record.

If you wait until after your full retirement age to begin receiving benefits, the surviving spouse benefits based on your record will be higher.

## What about receiving benefits while you work?

When you reach your full retirement age, you can work and earn as much as you want and still receive your full Social Security benefit payment.

Also, more work may increase your benefits. Each year, we review the records for all Social Security recipients who work. If your latest year of earnings turns out to be one of your highest years, we refigure your benefit and pay you any increase due.

## Use the online *Retirement Estimator* to find the best choice for you

Everyone's finances are different. Social Security has an online calculator that can provide immediate and accurate retirement benefit estimates to help you plan for your retirement.

The online *Retirement Estimator* is a convenient and secure financial planning tool that uses your own earnings record information. The Estimator will also let you see the effects of different retirement decisions. For example, you can change your expected future earnings to create and compare different retirement age choices. To use the *Retirement Estimator*, go to our website at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

## Applying for benefits online is so easy

The easiest way to apply for Social Security retirement benefits is to go online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits). Remember to complete your application three months before the month in which you want retirement benefits to begin.

If you don't have access to the internet, you can call **1-800-772-1213** (TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**) between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to apply by phone.

You can also apply at any Social Security office. To avoid a long wait, call first to make an appointment.

## Interested in other useful information?

You can visit these Social Security webpages.

[www.socialsecurity.gov/retire](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire)

This planner provides details about Social Security retirement benefits under current law. It also points out things you may want to consider as you prepare for the future.

[www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount)

On this webpage, you can set up a personal **my Social Security** account and check your earnings record on your *Social Security Statement*. The *Statement* is available online to workers age 18 and older. You can also print a copy of your *Social Security Statement*. If you

believe that any information in your *Statement* is incorrect, let your employer and your Social Security office know.

[www.socialsecurity.gov/faqs](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/faqs)

This webpage has answers to the most frequently asked questions about Social Security.

You can also visit these other government websites.

[www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov)

This site contains information on retirement planning, responding to life events, and other important money-related issues. The site also contains calculators for all your financial planning needs.

[www.sec.gov/investor/seniors.shtml](http://www.sec.gov/investor/seniors.shtml)

Are you looking for information about investment choices available to you as you enter retirement? The Securities and Exchange Commission has made information on investment products and topics available on this website.

## Contacting Social Security

Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) anytime to apply for benefits, open a **my Social Security** account, find publications, and get answers to frequently asked questions. Or, call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer case-specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Generally, you'll have a shorter wait time if you call after Tuesday. We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service, so a second Social Security representative monitors some telephone calls. We can provide general information by automated phone service 24 hours a day. And, remember, our website, [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), is available to you anytime and anywhere!