

Turning 65?

Whether you want to keep working or retire at age 65, here's what to know now so you can take an informed approach.

If you plan to continue actively working past age 65:

- You (and/or your spouse, if covered by Harvard Pilgrim and about to turn 65) may waive enrollment in Medicare Parts A, B and D until you retire, end employment with your current employer, or cancel or become ineligible for coverage through your current employer.
- Even if you continue working past age 65, you can sign up for Medicare Part A and/or Part B. Medicare Part B has a monthly premium; Medicare Part A is premium-free for those who have earned 40 credits (equal to 10 years of employment). Please note that if you have any part of Medicare and are enrolled in a plan with an HSA, you will not be able to contribute to the HSA.
- If you receive a Social Security check for at least 3 months before you turn 65, you will automatically be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B. Your Medicare coverage will be effective on the first day of the month in which you turn 65. If you don't want Medicare Parts A and/or B, follow the instructions that come with the card and send the card back.
- Contact your employer's human resources or benefits office when your employment ends to request proof of medical coverage so you can enroll in Medicare during the Special Enrollment Period. As long as you enroll with Medicare within eight months of ending your active employment, you will not be subject to a late enrollment penalty. If you don't sign up for Medicare Part B during the Special Enrollment Period, you will have to wait for the general open enrollment period, January 1-March 31.

If you are covering a domestic partner who will be turning 65:

Even if you continue actively working past age 65, your domestic partner, if covered, will need to make sure they are enrolled in Medicare Parts A, B and D when they turn age 65 to avoid a late enrollment surcharge. They should begin the Medicare enrollment process 3-4 months prior to their 65th birthday.

If you plan to retire when you turn 65:

- Enroll in Medicare Parts A, B and D three to four months prior to the month of your 65th birthday to avoid any penalties. The enrollment process can take up to six weeks.
- The "initial enrollment period" when you turn age 65 is a seven month time window in which to enroll. It comprises the three months before, the month of, and the three months after your birthday.
 - If you don't sign up for Medicare Parts A and B when you are initially eligible and you aren't covered through your own or your spouse's employer plan, you must wait for the next general open enrollment period, January 1-March 31. Your Medicare will have an effective date of July 1, and your premium may increase because of late enrollment penalties.
 - If you don't join a Medicare Part D plan, you may have to pay a penalty in the future if you join a Medicare prescription drug plan. The penalty will be determined by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and is based on the length of time that you were not enrolled in a Part D plan.
 - If you have Harvard Pilgrim's prescription drug coverage, Harvard Pilgrim will send you a notice annually to let you know if your prescription drug coverage is Medicare Part D creditable. This notice is important for Part D purposes to show that you had creditable coverage.



Read on for more ►

Medicare at a Glance

Who Is Eligible for Medicare?

To be eligible for Medicare based on age, an individual must be 65 years or older, and a U.S. citizen or a lawfully admitted, permanent resident of the U.S. who has lived in the U.S. continuously for five years. Please visit the sites listed in Additional Resources, at right, for other Medicare eligibility factors.



Additional Resources

Medicare:

(800) Medicare

www.medicare.gov

Medicare & You publication

Social Security

Administration:

(800) 772-1213

www.ssa.gov/medicare

Medicare Coverage Explained

Medicare Part	Coverage Type	Cost
A	Hospital insurance	Most people don't pay a Part A premium because they or their spouse paid Medicare taxes while they were working.
B	Medical insurance (including for doctor's visits)	Most people pay a Part B monthly premium, which is based on annual income.
D	Prescription drug coverage	Most people pay a Part D monthly premium, which varies depending on plan.

Understanding Medicare Enrollment

Enrollment Period Type	Triggering Event	Enrollment Time Frame (The window of time within which you should enroll to avoid a penalty*)
Initial	When you turn 65	The 3 months before, the month of, and the 3 months after your birthday (a 7-month window)
Special	Coverage from an employer-sponsored group medical plan ends	Up to 8 months from the date your coverage ends
General	Annually	January 1-March 31, for an effective date of July 1; late enrollment penalty may apply*

* If you do not enroll in Medicare when you are initially eligible and you do not have coverage through your or your spouse's employer group health plan, you may have to pay a penalty of an additional 10% for your Medicare Part B premium. This penalty is permanent and will increase by 10% each year you wait to enroll.

You may also incur a late enrollment penalty if you do not enroll in Medicare Part D when eligible or no longer have prescription drug coverage that is equivalent to Part D coverage. The penalty for non-creditable coverage is 1% of the national base premium for each month without creditable prescription drug coverage.