

4 COMMON MEDICARE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE

Medicare policies are the health insurance benefits you have worked toward throughout your life, and having the proper policy is critical as you are likely to face more health problems as you age.

While these policies can provide you with the coverage you need for your health conditions later in life, they may be confusing to navigate for some and can include a variety of pitfalls. Whether you are ready for a Medicare policy or planning ahead for the future, below are some costly missteps that you can do your best to avoid.

Mistake 1: Failing to Sign Up at the Proper Time

Timing is crucial when it comes to signing up for Medicare, as failing to sign up at the appropriate time may result in penalties. The time to enroll is during the initial enrollment period, from three months before you turn 65 to three months after you turn 65. If you miss this window, your next opportunity to enroll is during the official general enrollment period, which runs from January 1 through the end of March. While you will be able to choose from the same policies and coverage, the monthly premium for the Part B portion will likely increase.¹

Mistake 2: Missing the Special Enrollment Period

If you are 65 and lose your health insurance coverage through job loss, or loss of coverage from your spouse, you will be able to sign up for Medicare under the special enrollment period, which will allow you to sign up outside of the general enrollment period without incurring a penalty. This special enrollment period is only in effect during your other policy coverage and up to eight months after. Missing this period could result in penalties.¹

Mistake 3: Not Comparing Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans

It is essential to review the available plans and consider your health needs before deciding which policy to choose. Original Medicare is a federal government program with Part A for hospital costs and Part B for outpatient and doctor services. With original Medicare, Part D for prescriptions will need to be added as a stand-alone policy. Original Medicare does not cap your annual out-of-pocket costs. Medicare Advantage is a private insurance option that includes all three parts and also provides non-traditional services, such as transportation to medical appointments, as well as a cap on out-of-pocket expenses.²

Mistake 4: Not Enrolling in Part D With Original Medicare

Even if you don't have regular prescriptions you take, you will want to sign up for Part D when you sign up for your original Medicare. Failure to do so will result in a higher premium if you find out you need it later. Prescription costs are continuing to rise, and even the occasional prescription may result in costs higher than the addition to your premium.²

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This article was prepared by WriterAccess.

¹ "10 Common Medicare Mistakes to Avoid," AARP www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/info-2019/common-medicare-mistakes.html

² "The Most Common Medicare Mistakes and How to Avoid Them," US News health.usnews.com/health-news/medicare/articles/most-common-medicare-mistakes-and-how-to-avoid-them



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