



---

---

## MEDICARE CHEAT SHEET

---

### ENROLLMENT PERIODS:

---

- **Initial Enrollment Period:** This is the 7 month period that begins 3 months before the month you turn 65, includes the month you turn 65, and ends 3 months after the month you turn 65. Please note: if you wait until the month you turn 65 or the 3 months after to enroll, your coverage will be delayed and may cause a gap in coverage.
- **Special Enrollment Period:** If you are covered under a group health plan of more than 20 employees, based on current employment, you will qualify for a Special Enrollment Period when you retire or the group coverage ends. This enrollment period will last 8 months from the time employment ends or the health insurance is terminated. There will be no waiting periods or penalties to enroll in Part A or B of Medicare as long as it is within the 8 month window.
- **General Enrollment Period:** If you did not sign up for Medicare when you were first eligible and do not qualify for a Special Enrollment Period you can sign up between January 1<sup>st</sup> -March 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Your coverage will not go into effect until July 1<sup>st</sup> and you may be subject to a late enrollment penalty.
- **Annual Enrollment Period:** Between October 15<sup>th</sup> – December 7<sup>th</sup> every year. You can change your Prescription Drug Plan or Medicare Advantage Plan during this time period. The new coverage will go into effect January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period:** From January 1 – March 31 each year, if you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to Original Medicare (and join a separate Medicare drug plan) once during this time.



## PITFALLS TO AVOID:

---

- If you delay your Medicare enrollment because you or your spouse is still working and covered under a group health plan, make sure the employer group is more than 20 employees. **Medicare will not recognize groups of less than 20 employees.** If this is the case, Medicare will be your primary insurer and you will need to enroll during your Initial Enrollment Period.
- Once your employment ends or group coverage is terminated you have 8 months to sign up for Medicare Parts A & B. The 8 month enrollment window will start the month after employment ends or the group health plan is terminated. **COBRA coverage and retiree health plans are not considered coverage according to Medicare.** If you take COBRA or retiree coverage you still have only 8 months to enroll in Medicare Part B, regardless of how long the COBRA or retiree coverage runs.
- You may be charged a late enrollment penalty for any continuous period of 63 days or more you go without a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Part D) or comparable coverage from your employer group health plan.

