

# Remember Key Medicare Dates

Medicare Open Enrollment happens every year from October 15 – December 7. This is a great time to help someone review their Medicare health or drug coverage and help them decide if they want to make changes. Medicare costs and benefits can change each year. Health conditions, new prescription drugs, new providers, or a new diagnosis might also change someone's coverage needs.

**If someone with Medicare chooses to keep their current Medicare health and drug coverage, they don't need to do anything—their coverage will continue automatically.**

Around Open Enrollment, people with Medicare might get a lot of mail and advertisements from companies offering Medicare products. Remember, [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov), the “Medicare & You” handbook, and 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY: 1-877-486-2048) are the official sources of unbiased Medicare information.

## Important Medicare dates to remember

### October 1—Get ready for Open Enrollment

Review any notices from the current plan about cost and benefit changes for next year. Then, visit [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.Medicare.gov/plan-compare) to preview plan options for the upcoming year.

### October 15—Open Enrollment begins

This is the one time of year when everyone with Medicare can make changes to their health and drug plans for next year. People with Medicare can keep the plan they have, or join a new plan that meets their needs.

### December 7—Open Enrollment ends

In most cases, this is the last day to change Medicare coverage for next calendar year. You can help someone fill out an enrollment form if they're planning to switch plans. A health or drug plan must get the enrollment form by December 7.

### January 1—Coverage begins

If you're helping someone who changes to a new health or drug plan, their new coverage starts January 1. If they keep their current coverage, any changes to benefits or costs for the new year starts on January 1.

## Changing coverage after January 1

Between January 1 – March 31, people in a Medicare Advantage Plan can drop their plan and switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage), or to Original Medicare. Switching to Original Medicare also gives them the option to join a stand-alone Medicare drug plan. New coverage will begin the first day of the month after the plan gets their request.

## Shop for plans by going to [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare)

### You can help someone:

- Compare health and drug plans side by side
- Manage a list of preferred pharmacies and any prescription drugs they take
- Get an estimate of their out-of-pocket costs
- Find quality and customer service ratings from current plan members

### Need help comparing plans?

- **Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.**

We're here to help 24 hours a day, including weekends. For help in a language other than English or Spanish, let the customer service representative know.

A person with Medicare needs to give permission for you to speak to 1-800-MEDICARE on their behalf. They can fill out and mail a “Medicare Authorization to Disclose Personal Health Information” form (or submit it online in their [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) account).

- **Call the local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get free, personalized, and unbiased health insurance counseling.** Visit [shiphelp.org](https://shiphelp.org) to get the phone number for their local SHIP.



**Medicare**

You have the right to get Medicare information in an accessible format, like large print, braille, or audio. You also have the right to file a complaint if you feel you've been discriminated against. Visit [Medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice](https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice), or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for more information. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

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