

TURNING 65 MEDICARE KIT

Enroll on time. Avoid lifetime penalties. Know what you'll pay.

Welcome

Turning 65 means a one-time Medicare enrollment window. Miss it and you can pay a penalty for LIFE. This kit walks you through every step so you enroll on time, pick the right kind of coverage, and know your real costs before you sign up.

How to use it

Work the tabs left to right. Start with the Enrollment Timeline (your month-by-month checklist), learn the Parts (A/B/C/D), estimate your Costs, compare plans, and bring the Questions list to any agent or call.

Editable + printable

Type into any white cell to personalize it, or print it and fill it by hand. Works in Excel and free Google Sheets.

What's inside

1. Enrollment Timeline — month-by-month, penalty-proof
2. The 4 Parts of Medicare — in plain English
3. Your Cost Worksheet — real 2026 premiums + IRMAA
4. Plan Comparison — compare up to 3 options side by side
5. Questions to Ask — before you enroll
6. Key Dates — the windows that matter
7. Glossary — every term decoded
8. Important Notice — please read

Data in this kit uses official 2026 figures (SSA & CMS). See the Important Notice tab.

YOUR ENROLLMENT TIMELINE

Your 7-month Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) — built around the month you turn 65

Your IEP = the 3 months BEFORE your 65th-birthday month + your birthday month + the 3 months AFTER. Enroll in the first 3 months so coverage starts the month you turn 65.

MONTH-BY-MONTH CHECKLIST

When	What to do	Done? (✓)
3 months before 65	Review your current coverage. If you (or a spouse) still work and have employer coverage, check whether you must enroll now or can delay — ask HR in writing.	☐
3 months before 65	Decide your path: Original Medicare (Part A+B) + optional Medigap + Part D, OR a Medicare Advantage plan (Part C). See the Parts tab.	☐
2 months before 65	Sign up for Part A (and Part B unless delaying) at SSA.gov/medicare . This is the step that avoids the lifetime penalty.	☐
1 month before 65	Choose and enroll in your Part D drug plan (or a Medicare Advantage plan that includes drugs). Use the Cost + Comparison tabs.	☐
Birth month	Your Medicare coverage begins. Confirm your card arrived and your plan is active.	☐
1-3 months after	Still time to enroll if you missed it — but coverage may start later. Don't wait: gaps and penalties add up.	☐
Yearly after	Each fall (Oct 15–Dec 7) you can change Part D / Advantage plans during Open Enrollment. Re-check your drugs and costs.	☐

⚠ Penalty warning: skipping Part B without other job-based coverage adds 10% to your premium for every 12 months you delay — for as long as you have Medicare. Part D has its own lifelong penalty too.

THE 4 PARTS OF MEDICARE

In plain English — what each part covers and what it costs

Part	What it covers	What to know
Part A Hospital	Inpatient hospital stays, skilled nursing, hospice, some home health.	Usually \$0 premium if you or a spouse paid Medicare taxes 10+ years. Has a deductible per benefit period.
Part B Medical	Doctor visits, outpatient care, preventive services, durable equipment.	2026 standard premium \$202.90/mo; annual deductible \$283. Higher earners pay more (IRMAA — see Cost tab).
Part C Advantage	An all-in-one alternative to A+B from a private insurer, often with drug + extras.	Replaces Original Medicare; uses networks. You still pay the Part B premium. Compare carefully.
Part D Drugs	Prescription drug coverage from a private plan.	Premium varies by plan. Skipping it without other drug coverage triggers a lifelong penalty.

TWO MAIN PATHS — pick one

PATH A: Original Medicare	Part A + Part B, usually add a Medigap (supplement) plan + a Part D drug plan. More freedom to see any doctor that takes Medicare; predictable costs with Medigap.
PATH B: Medicare Advantage	One Part C plan that bundles A, B, and usually D, often with dental/vision extras. Lower upfront cost but uses provider networks and prior approvals.

YOUR MEDICARE COST WORKSHEET

Real 2026 figures — estimate what you'll actually pay per month

Most people pay the standard Part B premium of \$202.90/mo. If your 2024 income was high, you pay an IRMAA surcharge on top. Find your row in the table below, then fill your estimate at the bottom.

2026 PART B & PART D PREMIUMS BY INCOME (based on 2024 tax return)

Single income (MAGI)	Married/joint	Part B /mo	Part D extra /mo
\$109,000 or less	\$218,000 or less	\$202.90	\$0 + plan
\$109,001–\$137,000	\$218,001–\$274,000	\$284.10	\$14.50 + plan
\$137,001–\$171,000	\$274,001–\$342,000	\$405.80	\$37.50 + plan
\$171,001–\$205,000	\$342,001–\$410,000	\$527.50	\$60.40 + plan
\$205,001–\$500,000	\$410,001–\$750,000	\$649.20	\$83.30 + plan
Above \$500,000	Above \$750,000	\$689.90	\$91.00 + plan

Source: SSA POMS HI 01101.020 (2026 IRMAA tables) + CMS 2026 Part B fact sheet. “+ plan” = your chosen Part D plan premium on top. IRMAA is a cliff: \$1 over a line = the full higher amount.

YOUR MONTHLY ESTIMATE (type your numbers)

Part B premium (from table)	
Part D drug plan premium (your plan)	
Medigap / supplement premium (if any)	
Medicare Advantage premium (if any)	
ESTIMATED TOTAL PER MONTH	\$0.00

COMPARE YOUR PLANS

Put up to 3 options side by side, then circle the winner

What to compare	Plan 1	Plan 2	Plan 3
Plan name / carrier			
Type (Original+Medigap / Advantage)			
Monthly premium			
Annual deductible			
Doctor visit copay			
Specialist copay			
Are MY doctors in-network?			
Are MY drugs covered?			
Dental / vision / hearing?			
Out-of-pocket maximum			
Needs referrals / prior approval?			
My rating (1-5)			

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU ENROLL

Bring this to any agent, broker, or 1-800-MEDICARE call

About coverage

• Are all of my current doctors and hospitals in this plan's network?	notes:
• Are every one of my prescriptions on the plan's drug list (formulary), and what tier?	notes:
• Does this plan need referrals or prior approval to see specialists?	notes:
• What is the most I could pay out of pocket in a bad year (out-of-pocket max)?	notes:

About cost

• What is my total monthly premium, including Part B, Part D, and any supplement?	notes:
• What are the copays for primary care, specialists, and the ER?	notes:
• Will my income trigger an IRMAA surcharge, and how much?	notes:
• Are dental, vision, and hearing included, or extra?	notes:

About the agent

• Are you paid the same no matter which plan I choose? (watch for steering)	notes:
• Which carriers do you NOT represent, so I know what I'm not seeing?	notes:
• Can you help me re-check this every fall during Open Enrollment?	notes:

KEY MEDICARE DATES

The enrollment windows that matter — miss them and you wait, or pay

Window	When	What it's for
Initial Enrollment (IEP)	7 months around your 65th birthday	Your first chance to enroll without penalty.
General Enrollment	Jan 1 – Mar 31 each year	If you missed your IEP. Coverage starts the month after you sign up. Penalties may apply.
Open Enrollment (AEP)	Oct 15 – Dec 7 each year	Switch Part D or Medicare Advantage plans for the next year.
Medicare Advantage OEP	Jan 1 – Mar 31 each year	If on Advantage, make one change.
Special Enrollment (SEP)	Varies (e.g., leaving job coverage)	Enroll outside normal windows after qualifying life events — often penalty-free.

PLAIN-ENGLISH GLOSSARY

Every term you'll hear, decoded

Premium	The monthly amount you pay to have a plan.
Deductible	What you pay yourself before the plan starts paying.
Copay / Coinsurance	Your share of a visit or service after the deductible.
IRMAA	An extra amount higher-income people pay for Part B and D, based on tax returns from 2 years ago.
Medigap (Supplement)	Private insurance that fills the gaps in Original Medicare (deductibles, coinsurance).
Formulary	The list of drugs a Part D or Advantage plan covers.
Network	The doctors and hospitals a plan contracts with; out-of-network costs more or isn't covered.
MAGI	Modified Adjusted Gross Income — the income figure used to decide IRMAA.
Out-of-pocket maximum	The most you'll pay in a year; the plan covers 100% after that (Advantage plans).
Guaranteed issue	Times when an insurer must sell you Medigap regardless of health.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please read

This kit is an educational organizer to help you prepare for Medicare. It is NOT insurance, legal, tax, or financial advice, and it does not recommend any specific plan or carrier.

We are not affiliated with, endorsed by, or connected to the U.S. government, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), or the Social Security Administration (SSA).

All figures are 2026 official amounts at the time of writing, drawn from public CMS and SSA sources (SSA POMS HI 01101.020; CMS 2026 Part B fact sheet: standard premium \$202.90, deductible \$283). Amounts and rules can change — always confirm at Medicare.gov and SSA.gov.

For free official help: visit Medicare.gov, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), or contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for free unbiased counseling.

Decisions about your coverage are your own. Consider speaking with a licensed insurance agent or a SHIP counselor before enrolling.