

Medicare Part D – Prescription Drug Benefit

What does Part D cover?

Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit, is the part of Medicare that covers most outpatient prescription drugs. Part D is offered through private companies either as a stand-alone prescription drug plan (PDP), for those enrolled in Original Medicare or, a set of benefits included with your Medicare Advantage Plan.

How much does Part D cost?

Monthly premium	Varies by plan. Base premium is \$32.74 in 2023.
Deductible	Varies by plan. Cannot be more than \$505 in 2023.
Coinsurance/copays	Vary by plan. Many Part D plans use tiers to price the drugs listed on their formularies. Typically, drugs in lower tiers are less expensive and drugs in higher tiers are more expensive.

Starting in 2023 all Part D plans will cover vaccines with zero cost-sharing and will cap monthly insulin cost-sharing at \$35.

Note: If you have Extra Help, the federal drug cost assistance program for people with Medicare, your monthly premium and copays may be lower.

How do I choose a Part D plan?

You should make sure to find a Part D plan that meets your specific health care needs. Before you start looking at plans, make sure you know the prescriptions you take, including their dosages and usual costs and the pharmacies you regularly use.

Drug coverage

- Are my prescriptions on the plan's formulary (list of covered drugs)?
- Does the plan impose any coverage restrictions, such as prior authorization or step therapy?
- If the plan does not cover a medication I take, does it cover one that will work for me? (Ask your doctor.)

Costs

- How much will I pay at the pharmacy (copayments or coinsurance) for each drug I need?
- How much will I pay for monthly premiums and the annual deductible?
- How much will I have to pay for brand-name drugs? How much for generic drugs?
- What will I pay for my drugs during the coverage gap?
- If a drug I take has a very high coinsurance, is there a drug I can take that will cost less? (Ask your doctor.)
- Am I eligible for Extra Help or a State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (SPAP)?

Pharmacy network

- What is the service area for the plan?
- Can I fill my prescriptions at the pharmacies I use regularly?
- Can I fill my prescriptions when I travel?
- What will my coverage options and costs be if I visit out-of-network pharmacies?
- Can I get prescriptions by mail order?

Coordination with other insurance

- Will Part D work with other coverage I have to lower my costs?
- Do I need to enroll in Part D if I have other creditable coverage?
- Do I need to enroll in Part D if I have job-based drug coverage?

You can use Medicare's Plan Finder tool to find plans in your area. Plan Finder will show you estimated Part D costs as well as more specific details about your Part D covered drugs. You can use this tool to compare plans and choose a plan that works best for you. Visit www.medicare.gov/plan-compare to use the tool.

How do I enroll in a Part D plan?

You can enroll in a Part D plan by contacting 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

You can also contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for assistance and counseling around choosing a Part D plan. Visit www.shiphelp.org or call 877-839-2675 to contact your SHIP.