

The AMERICAN RETIREMENT ADVISOR

A guidepost to your successful retirement.



Leaving Employer Group Insurance and Enrolling in Medicare

Research Provided by David P. Schaeffer, CSA

If you intend to leave employer group health insurance after you are age 65 and Medicare-eligible, you are in luck. Medicare works wonderfully for over 56 million Americans.

Unfortunately, the government has made the rules a little bit cumbersome if you leave within the 6 months immediately following your 65th birthday. The charts following are our best efforts in helping you determine when your “Eligible to Enroll” and “NOT – ELIGIBLE” to enroll months are.

After the 7th month of your Medicare eligibility has passed, you will be free to begin Medicare any month you wish.

Key points to remember: (1) COBRA is not considered employee group health insurance and will not allow you to enroll in Medicare based on the rules illustrated on the following pages, and (2) Your employee group health insurance must insure at least 20 employee lives to be considered *credible coverage* under Medicare’s guidelines.

Leaving Employer group insurance within the 7th month of Medicare eligibility

Medicare Coverage Eligible and Black-Out Months

3 Months prior to Month of Eligibility	2 Months prior to Month of Eligibility	1 Month prior to Month of Eligibility	Month of Medicare Eligibility	2 nd Month of Eligibility	3 rd Month of Eligibility	4 th Month of Eligibility	5 th Month of Eligibility	6 th Month of Eligibility	7 th Month of Eligibility
					Cannot Begin Medicare		Cannot Begin Medicare		
October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
E-3	E-2	E-1	E	E+1	E+2	E+3	E+4	E+5	E+6

3 Months prior to Month of Eligibility	2 Months prior to Month of Eligibility	1 Month prior to Month of Eligibility	Month of Medicare Eligibility	2 nd Month of Eligibility	3 rd Month of Eligibility	4 th Month of Eligibility	5 th Month of Eligibility	6 th Month of Eligibility	7 th Month of Eligibility
OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	OK to enroll in Medicare	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B

			Medicare Coverage Can Begin	Medicare Coverage Can Begin	Cannot Begin Medicare	Medicare Coverage Can Begin	Cannot Begin Medicare	Medicare Coverage Can Begin	Medicare Coverage Can Begin
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Notes:

Can enroll online for "Month of Eligibility" Start	Can enroll online for "Month of Eligibility" Start	Can enroll online for "Month of Eligibility" Start	Can enroll online Part A will begin Month of Eligibility Part B will begin 2 nd Month of Eligibility	Can enroll online Part A will begin Month of Eligibility Part B will begin 4 th Month of Eligibility	Can enroll online Part A will begin Month of Eligibility Part B will begin 5 th Month of Eligibility	Can enroll online Part A will begin Month of Eligibility Part B will begin 7 th Month of Eligibility	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B	Must use Special Election to Enroll or wait for next Open Enrollment for Parts A & B
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Medicare start dates revolve around a complex set of rules. Separating from creditable employer group coverage while still in the initial enrollment period of Medicare must follow the start dates listed above as interpreted from SSA.gov and Medicare.gov.

Leaving Employer group insurance after the 7th month of Medicare eligibility.

Suggested Date	✓	Steps
		1. Get form CMS-L546 (CMS-R-297) <i>Just google it!</i>
		2. Obtain proof of creditable coverage from your employer(s). Use Form CMS-L546 (CMS-R-297). You will need a form completed for each employer that provided coverage while you were Medicare eligible.
		3. Enroll in Medicare Part A&B and give the completed form, in person, to a Social Security agent. We suggest an in-person visit to enroll and present the proof of creditable coverage. Then ASK for a receipt showing you have initiated the Medicare Part A and Part B enrollment process. (Social security officially describes the receipt as an Application Summary).
		4. Enroll in a Medicare Plan. Provide your new Medicare Card with Medicare Parts A&B, or the Application Summary, to your advisor to complete your application for a Medicare plan. Keep in mind, standard Medicare Supplement or Medicare Advantage application processing ranges from 10 to 15 days.

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For information about planning for long-term care...

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