

# Medicare 101

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Hey there, and welcome to Eligibility's Medicare series. In this video series you'll learn the basics of Medicare.

We'll also give you helpful information to determine your best choices as you navigate this new territory.

Today we're going to discuss what Medicare is and how it works.

You probably know that Medicare is a federal health insurance program for anyone 65 and up and people with qualifying disabilities. But you may not know that Medicare is an optional program, and nobody forces you to enroll.

And while we're at it, let's discuss another misconception: Medicare is not the same as Medicaid, which is a health program specifically for low-income people of all ages.

Now onto the basics of Medicare. Several parts comprise the system we call Medicare and you may have heard about some of these before.

Part A, often called *hospital insurance*, is the part of Medicare that covers hospital stays and nursing care—for example, your room and board as well as professional nursing services.

This part is usually free if you worked long enough. However, Part A is far from comprehensive: A lot of services received in the hospital may be billed under Part B.

Part B, often called *medical insurance*, is the part of Medicare that covers doctors, outpatient procedures, diagnostic tests, durable medical equipment, and much, much more. Part B is not free.

Part A and Part B are referred to as "Original Medicare" or "Traditional Medicare." Together, Part A & B form the core benefits that you'll likely need regardless of other choices you make in your Medicare journey.

The next part of Medicare is Part D. Part D covers prescription drugs. You can add Part D to your Medicare coverage through a standalone plan for an additional premium.

Or you can get Part D through something called Medicare Advantage plans—more on that later.

Medigap, or Medicare Supplement, is an extra insurance you can buy to lower some of the costs of Original Medicare.

Finally, Medicare Advantage is an alternative way to get Medicare benefits. Insurance companies manage Medicare Advantage plans, which all include the benefits of Part A and Part B. Most Medicare Advantage plans include Part D as part of your coverage.

And Medicare Advantage plans may include extra perks you can't get with Original Medicare, such as vision, dental, and hearing benefits. Many Advantage plans even come with fitness memberships (like SilverSneakers).

Well, there you have it—the basics of Medicare. Remember to download the welcome packet by clicking the link below, which accompanies today's lesson and the rest of the series.

*If you're close to enrolling in Medicare, consider signing up to receive our e-mails. We'll send you helpful guides, hints, and reminders so you can get the info you need to make informed decisions regarding your coverage.*