



North Texas Specialty Physicians

A Guide to Medicare



North Texas Specialty Physicians

Known as NTSP – is an Independent Physician Association comprised of more than 1,000 family and specialty doctors dedicated to delivering the best care to the residents of Dallas/Fort Worth Metro area. Unlike some physician groups, NTSP is governed by a board comprised solely of local doctors and is managed by resident healthcare experts.

Since its founding in 1995, NTSP doctors have delivered high-quality medical care to more than 15,000 Medicare-eligible patients everyday. If you are eligible or will soon be eligible for Medicare, it is important for you to understand Medicare – the basics, the choices and the deadlines.

Medicare Basics

Medicare is for people ages 65 and older and others with certain disabilities. Most people are automatically enrolled in traditional Medicare which includes Parts A and B. Part A helps pay for hospital visits and most people receive it for free. Part B has a monthly premium and helps cover doctor visits and outpatient care. While Medicare Parts A and B cover some of your healthcare needs, they do not cover everything. To help pay for the costs not covered by traditional Medicare, such as prescription drug costs, additional Medicare options are available.



Parts of Medicare

PART A: HOSPITAL COVERAGE

Part A helps cover your inpatient care in hospitals, including critical access hospitals and long-term care hospitals. Most people automatically get Part A without having to pay a monthly premium.

PART B: MEDICAL COVERAGE

Part B helps cover medical services such as doctors' services and outpatient care when they are medically necessary. Most people pay a Medicare Part B premium.

PART C: MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

Part C coverage is provided by Medicare Advantage plans and includes all of Parts A and B as well as extra benefits. For some plans, you pay a monthly premium. When you belong to a Medicare Advantage plan, there is no need to use your Medicare card.

PART D: PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

Part D coverage is designed to help lower your prescription drug costs. Part D coverage is available in stand-alone plans or may be included with a Medicare Advantage plan.

3 Medicare options to consider:

OPTION 1:

You can rely on traditional Medicare Parts A and B to provide your coverage. It's important to understand that traditional Medicare alone covers approximately 80% of most people's medical expenses but does not provide prescription drug coverage. For Part D coverage, an additional stand-alone plan can be purchased to help with the cost of prescription drugs.

OPTION 2:

You can purchase a Medicare Supplement plan in addition to traditional Medicare to fill the gaps not covered by Medicare alone. Medicare Supplement plans are offered by private insurance companies and have no affiliation with Medicare. Medicare Supplement plans cover some of the costs that aren't paid for by Parts A and B and do not offer Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. For Part D coverage, an additional, stand-alone plan must be purchased. Medicare Supplement plans can offer comprehensive coverage, but typically cost more than Medicare Advantage plans—sometimes a lot more.

OPTION 3:

You can choose a Medicare Advantage plan to provide the same coverage as Medicare Parts A and B, plus more benefits and services, including Part D prescription drug coverage, vision, hearing and dental coverage. Medicare Advantage plans provide these benefits through a contract with the government. You will not need a Medicare Supplement plan if you choose a Medicare Advantage plan.

Medicare Advantage Plans

MEDICARE PART C

Medicare contracts with Medicare Advantage companies to provide all of your Medicare benefits in one simple plan, including additional coverage you may need. Many Medicare Advantage plans offer or include your Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. When you join a Medicare Advantage plan, you are still in Medicare, but you won't have to use your Medicare card to obtain services. Your Medicare Advantage plan will provide all of your Part A (hospital) and Part B (medical) coverage as well as other medically necessary services. Because much of the cost of these programs is provided through a government contract, premiums are generally lower than what you might pay for a Medicare Supplement plan or other private health plan.



North Texas Specialty Physicians participates in the following Medicare Advantage Plans:

CARE N' CARE: a Medicare Advantage organization created by local doctors for residents of Dallas/Fort Worth Metro area. Care N' Care offers both PPO and HMO plans that include additional benefits beyond those provided by traditional Medicare including lower costs than most Medicare Supplements, low-cost prescriptions, and prescription coverage within the coverage gap. You can choose local doctors who are convenient to you, with freedom from referrals.

UNITEDHEALTHCARE: offers a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plan with a Medicare contract where members choose from a network of doctors and hospitals. In this type of plan, local doctors oversee and coordinate your care, often resulting in premium savings and additional healthcare benefits. Many HMO plans offer wellness benefits, prescription drug coverage, and additional medical benefits not provided by traditional Medicare.

HUMANA: offers a Medicare Advantage HMO plan with a Medicare contract that provides broad coverage. It includes all the benefits of traditional Medicare and may include prescription drug coverage and many extras. With this plan you choose a doctor from the broad network to coordinate your care.

Prescription Drug Coverage

MEDICARE PART D

Part D prescription drug plans can save you money on the prescription drugs you take. Even if you're not taking many prescription drugs now, you may want to consider adding this coverage to your medical plan. Some Medicare Advantage plans include Part D coverage as part of the plan. Standalone prescription drug plans are also available if you choose to stay with traditional Medicare or join a Medicare Supplement plan. If you are eligible for a Medicare prescription drug plan and you choose not to enroll, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty when you do join.

Most Medicare drug plans have a coverage gap (also called the "donut hole"). This means that there is a temporary limit on what the drug plan will cover for drugs. The coverage gap begins after you and your drug plan have spent a certain amount for covered drugs. The coverage gap ends after you reach a certain amount of out-of-pocket expenses. Some Medicare Advantage plans offer higher levels of Part D coverage, including coverage during the gap period.



MEDICARE ENROLLMENT ►

Medicare enrollment is time-sensitive. Each year, Medicare beneficiaries have a set time to enroll in or change Medicare plans. Make sure you mark these important dates on your calendar.

Enrollment begins on October 15 and ends on December 7th.

Annual Enrollment Period: October 15th – December 7th

This is for anyone wishing to join a plan or switch to a different plan.

ANNUAL DISENROLLMENT PERIOD: JAN. 1ST – FEB. 14TH

During this period, anyone already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan can switch back to traditional Medicare and enroll in a stand-alone Part D plan.

SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD: JAN. 1ST – OCT. 14TH

Only those who are new to Medicare or have special circumstances can join a Medicare Advantage plan during this time.



GETTING STARTED ►

1. Determine when you need to enroll in a Medicare Health Plan

If you currently have employer coverage, you can choose to disenroll and then elect to enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan. You can also enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan during a two-month special election period after retiring or losing employer coverage.

If you are turning 65 and are eligible for Medicare, you want to be sure you have the coverage you need beginning the month you turn 65. You can enroll up to three months before the month you turn 65, the month of your birthday, and up to three months after.

2. Review your plan options based on the health coverage you need

Even if you have existing Medicare coverage, it's important to review your options each year. Your plan choices are not permanent.

Depending on your plan, you have a chance to change to a plan that may provide the additional coverage you need.

Call today

North Texas Specialty Physicians recommends calling the SilverBack Agency Medicare Information Line below to help you explore your options and match Medicare plans that meet your specific needs.

1-877-674-1568

8am - 5pm, Monday - Friday



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