

Do I need Medicare if I'm 65 and still working?

If you're still working and already have health care coverage through your employer, you may be wondering if you should sign up for Medicare when you first become eligible, or delay your enrollment until you're ready to retire. While it's not always a straightforward answer, knowing your options can help make your decision much easier.

Medicare Part A (Hospitalization)

If you need services like a hospital visit or nursing home care, Medicare Part A may give you coverage beyond what's offered through your employer. And, if you or your spouse has paid Medicare payroll taxes while employed, you're eligible for a premium-free Medicare Part A plan. You'll likely want to enroll in Medicare Part A when you become eligible, especially if it means you'll get extra coverage at no additional cost.

Medicare Part B (Medical)

Part B covers medical services like lab tests, surgeries and doctor visits. It's similar to the coverage offered by your employer, and if you choose to enroll you'll pay a monthly premium to the federal government. For these reasons, you might want to delay enrolling in Part B until after you retire. But, before you make your decision, keep in mind that depending on the size of your employer, you may need to enroll in Medicare Part B before your employer insurance will pay your claim.

If your employer is:	Your claims will be paid first by:	Your claims will be paid second by:	Should you be in Part B?
Large (more than 20 employees)	Employer coverage	Medicare	If you decide to enroll, Medicare will only pay for services not covered by your employer plan. That means you may end up paying monthly premiums for Medicare with little or no return, especially if you have good employer coverage.
Small (fewer than 20 employees)	Medicare	Employer coverage	Small employers can require Medicare-eligible employees to enroll in Medicare. When this happens, your employer plan will only cover what Medicare doesn't. So, if you don't sign up for Part B when you're eligible, you may be left without coverage.*

**If you work for a small company, be sure to ask your employer or benefits administrator whether or not they require you to sign up for Medicare when you become eligible. In some cases, your employer may not require it, and the guidelines for large employer will apply.*