TEN POINT FINANCIAL GROUP

Building Generational Wealth

The Medicare Decision Guide

A 4-step framework for picking the right plan

Most people approach Medicare backwards — they shop plans before they understand the system. This guide flips that. Four steps, in order. Once you've gone through them, you'll know what kind of plan fits and what questions to ask any agent or carrier.

Step 1 — Know the 4 Parts

Medicare has 4 parts. Each covers different things. You need to understand them as a system, not as separate purchases.

- Part A — Hospital insurance. Mostly free if you paid Medicare taxes for 40 quarters (10 years).
- Part B — Outpatient/doctor visits. Standard 2025 premium is $185/month (higher if your income is over $106K single / $212K joint via IRMAA).
- Part C — Medicare Advantage. A private plan that bundles A, B, and usually D into one policy with networks and copays.
- Part D — Prescription drugs. Either standalone or bundled inside Advantage.

Step 2 — Pick the Big Decision: Advantage or Supplement

This is the most important choice you'll make. It affects networks, costs, and your ability to switch later.

- Medicare Advantage (Part C): usually $0 premium, but uses networks (HMO/PPO). Lower monthly cost, less freedom. Annual plan/network changes.
- Original Medicare + Medigap (Supplement): higher monthly premium, but works with any provider that accepts Medicare nationwide. Predictable costs. Less yearly change.
- Travel often? See specialists? Have chronic conditions? Medigap usually wins.
- Stay local, want low monthly cost, healthy? Advantage often wins.

Step 3 — If Medigap, Pick the Letter

Medigap plans are standardized — Plan G with one carrier covers identically to Plan G with another. Compare PRICE between carriers, not coverage.

- Plan G — Most popular. Covers everything except the Part B deductible ($257 in 2025).
- Plan N — Cheaper than G. You pay small copays ($20 doctor visits, $50 ER) and the Part B excess if it applies.
- Plan F — Most comprehensive. Only available if you were eligible for Medicare before Jan 1, 2020.
- High-Deductible Plan G — Lowest premium, but you pay $2,800 before coverage kicks in. Best for healthy retirees with savings.

Step 4 — Don't Miss Your Enrollment Windows

Medicare has strict deadlines. Missing them can cost you for life via permanent late penalties.

- Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) — 7 months around your 65th birthday. The window everyone gets once.
- Medigap Open Enrollment — 6 months starting when you enroll in Part B. Guaranteed-issue. Skip this window and you'll need to qualify medically later.
- Annual Election Period (AEP) — Oct 15 to Dec 7 every year. Switch Advantage or Part D plans for the next year.
- Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment (MA OEP) — Jan 1 to Mar 31. One-time switch out of Advantage each year.
- Special Enrollment Periods (SEP) — Triggered by life events (moving, losing employer coverage, etc.).

Quick Self-Check: Are You Ready to Enroll?

If you answer no to any of these, slow down and get help.

- Do I know my Part B premium based on my income?
- Have I decided Advantage vs Medigap?
- Do I know which carrier's plan G/N rate is lowest in my zip code?
- Do I know my prescription costs under different Part D plans?
- Do I know my doctors are in-network (if Advantage) or accept Medicare (if Original)?
- Do I understand the penalty if I delay Part B or Part D without qualifying coverage?

NEXT STEP

Want a free Medicare plan review?

We'll compare every plan in your county, factor in your doctors and prescriptions, and tell you honestly which one fits. No cost. No pressure.

Schedule online:
tenpointfinancialgroup.com/contact?from=guide-medicare

Or call:
+1 (586) 899-1003

Sources: Medicare.gov, CMS, KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation). 2025 numbers.