

Tab E -- What You Should Know About Medigap

Medigap Basics

A Medigap policy is a health insurance policy sold by private insurance companies. Costs you pay for Medicare benefits — like coinsurance, copayments and deductibles— are called “gaps” in Original Medicare. You might want to buy a Medigap policy to help cover these gaps. Some Medigap policies also cover benefits that aren’t covered by Medicare, like emergency health care while traveling outside the United States.

Medigap coverage is different from your <Plan Name> coverage. Since Medigap policies only help pay for health care costs if you are in Original Medicare, you don’t need a Medigap policy if you’re in a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Medigap policies must follow Federal and state laws designed to protect you, and they must be clearly identified as “Medicare Supplement Insurance.” Medigap insurance companies can sell you only a “standardized” Medigap policy identified in most states by letters, Plans A through N. All plans offer the same basic benefits but some offer additional benefits, so you can choose which one meets your needs.

Insurance companies may charge different premiums for exactly the same Medigap coverage. As you shop for a Medigap policy, be sure you’re comparing the same Medigap policy (for example, compare Plan A from one company with Plan A from another company).

Your Rights to Buy a Medigap Policy

When you lose your health coverage, you may have special rights called Medigap protections or guaranteed issue rights. If you buy a Medigap policy when you have guaranteed issue rights, the insurance company must sell you a policy, must cover pre-existing conditions and can’t charge you more because of any past or present health problems. Because you’re losing coverage under <Plan Name>, you may have a right to buy a Medigap policy. To protect your rights, you must apply for a Medigap policy no later than 63 calendar days after your coverage under < Plan Name> ends.

- **Because your coverage under our plan ends December 31, 2010, you must apply for a Medigap policy no later than March 4, 2011. If you leave our plan before December 31, 2010, you have 63 calendar days from the day your coverage ends to apply for a Medigap policy.**
- If you’re 65 or older, you have the right to buy Medigap Plan A, B, C, F, K, or L from any company selling these policies in <State>.
- You may also have the right to buy a Medigap policy in addition to Plans A, B, C, F, K, or L in these situations:

- You're 65 or older and first got Medicare Part B in the last 6 months.
 - You dropped a Medigap policy within the last 12 (in some cases 24) months to join a Medicare Advantage Plan for the first time.
 - You joined a Medicare Advantage Plan during the last 12 (in some cases 24) months when you were first eligible for Medicare Part A at age 65.
 - Some states require insurance companies to sell you other Medigap policies when your coverage under <Plan Name> ends.
- If you're under 65, you may not be able to buy a Medigap policy until you're 65. There's no federal law that says insurance companies must sell a Medigap policy to you. However, some states require companies to sell you a policy at certain times, even if you are under age 65. If an insurance company sells Medigap Plan A, B, C, F, K, or L to anyone with Medicare, including those under 65, in <State>, it must sell these plans to anyone whose Medicare Advantage Plan will no longer provide Medicare services.

If you think any of these situations apply to you or if you aren't sure, or if you want to learn if Medigap policies are available to people under 65 in your state, you should call <SHIP Name> at <SHIP Phone> as soon as possible because **you have a limited time to apply**. TTY users should call <SHIP TTY >.

You Can Apply for a Medigap Policy Now

You can apply for a Medigap policy now. If you want to buy a Medigap policy, follow these steps:

1. Contact the insurance company that sells the Medigap policy you want, and ask for an application.
2. Fill out the application, and make a copy of the cover letter that came with this mailing. It will prove that you have special rights to buy a Medigap policy.
3. Mail the application and a copy of the letter to the Medigap insurance company.

You must apply for the policy by March 4, 2011 if you stay in our plan until December 31, 2010. This is 63 days after your coverage under <Plan Name> ends. If you leave our plan before December 31, 2010, you have 63 calendar days from the day your coverage ends to apply for a Medigap policy.

It's best to apply before your coverage with our plan ends so that your Medigap policy starts the same day as your Original Medicare coverage.

For More Information About Medigap Policies

- Visit www.medicare.gov/ to view the booklet, “Choosing a Medigap Policy: A Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare.”
- Call your State Insurance Department to get more information. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get the telephone number. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- Visit www.medicare.gov/MPPF. Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).
- Call <SHIP Name> at <SHIP Phone> for free personalized health care counseling. TTY users should call <SHIP TTY >.

FOR HAWAII:

The Hawaii SHIP office (aka Sage PLUS Program) can be reached at:

Oahu - 586-7299

Neighbor Islands - Toll-free 1-888-875-9229 or

www.hawaiiiship.org

A listing of Medigap insurers is available at:

www.hawaii.gov/dcca/ins/consumer/consumer_information/Medicare_Supplement_Listing_of_Insurers.pdf