Help465 Medicare Academy

Lesson 3: Avoiding Common Medicare Mistakes

Seven Medicare Mistakes That Could Cost You Time, Money, and Peace of Mind

Estimated Time: 10–12 Minutes

Skill Level: Beginner

Welcome Back

You've already learned what Medicare is and explored the two primary ways people receive their Medicare benefits.

Now let's talk about something just as important.

The mistakes.

Every year, people make Medicare decisions they later wish they had approached differently…not because they weren't intelligent, but because Medicare can be confusing and they're often asked to make important decisions before they fully understand their options.

The encouraging news is that many of these mistakes are preventable.

Today's lesson is designed to help you recognize them before they happen.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

✔ Recognize seven common Medicare mistakes.

✔ Understand why these mistakes happen.

✔ Learn practical ways to avoid them.

✔ Feel more confident preparing for Medicare enrollment.

Mistake #1

Waiting Until the Last Minute

Many people begin learning about Medicare only a few weeks before their 65th birthday.

By then, they may feel rushed by deadlines, advertisements, and information overload.

A Better Approach

Start learning several months before you're eligible.

Giving yourself time to understand your options often leads to better decisions.

Real-Life Scenario

Maria turns 65 in three months.

Instead of waiting until the last minute, she spends a little time each week learning about Medicare. By the time she's ready to enroll, she understands the basics and feels much more confident.

Lesson: Knowledge reduces stress.

Medicare Minute

One of the greatest advantages you can give yourself isn't choosing a plan early.

It's **learning early.**

Mistake #2

Assuming Enrollment Happens Automatically

Not everyone is automatically enrolled in Medicare.

Some people are.

Others need to enroll themselves.

Knowing which situation applies to you is important before your enrollment period ends.

Mistake #3

Choosing a Plan Before Checking Your Doctors

Your relationship with your healthcare providers matters.

A plan that looks attractive on television may not include your preferred doctors or hospitals.

A Better Approach

Before making a decision, verify:

- Your doctors.
- Your specialists.
- Your hospitals.
- Any providers that are important to you.

Help465 Heads-Up ⚠️

Always confirm provider participation before enrolling.

Don't rely on assumptions or outdated information.

Mistake #4

Forgetting About Prescription Medications

Prescription drug coverage varies from plan to plan.

Even when two plans appear similar, the way they cover your medications may be very different.

A Better Approach

Create a complete medication list before comparing plans.

Include:

- Medication names.
- Dosages.
- Frequency.
- Preferred pharmacy.

Mistake #5

Comparing Only Monthly Premiums

Monthly premiums are important.

But they're only one piece of the puzzle.

Healthcare costs may also include:

- Copayments.
- Deductibles.
- Coinsurance.
- Prescription costs.
- Other out-of-pocket expenses.

A Better Approach

Compare your expected total healthcare costs…not simply your monthly premium.

Mistake #6

Never Reviewing Your Coverage Again

Healthcare changes.

Prescription medications change.

Doctors change.

Medicare plans change.

That's why reviewing your coverage every year is an important habit.

Reviewing doesn't mean changing.

It simply means confirming your current plan still fits your needs.

Mistake #7

Letting Advertisements Make the Decision

Television commercials can introduce Medicare options.

They cannot evaluate your healthcare needs.

Only you can decide which Medicare coverage best supports your doctors, prescriptions, healthcare priorities, and budget.

Advertisements are a starting point…not the finish line.

Myth vs. Fact

Myth: The Medicare plan with the most advertised benefits is automatically the best choice.

Fact: The best plan is the one that fits your individual healthcare needs…not the one with the most commercials.

Helpful Medicare Terms

Provider Network — The doctors, hospitals, and healthcare providers that participate with a health plan.

Formulary — A plan's list of covered prescription medications.

Annual Review — Reviewing your Medicare coverage each year to make sure it still fits your healthcare needs.

Quick Knowledge Check

1.

True or False?

The lowest monthly premium always means the lowest healthcare costs.

Answer: False.

2.

Why is it important to review your medications before choosing a plan?

☐ Because every plan covers medications exactly the same.

☐ Because prescription drug coverage can vary by plan.

Answer: Prescription drug coverage can vary by plan.

3.

Should television advertisements be your only source of Medicare information?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Answer: No.

Reflection

Think about your own situation.

Which of today's seven mistakes do you think would be easiest to make?

Which one surprised you the most?

Is there anything you'd like to double-check before making future Medicare decisions?

Remember...

The purpose of learning isn't perfection.

It's preparation.

What You Learned

Congratulations!

Today you learned:

✅ Seven common Medicare mistakes.

✅ Why they happen.

✅ How to avoid them.

✅ Why preparation builds confidence.

Before You Move On

Before beginning Lesson 4, make sure you can answer "yes" to these questions:

✓ Do I understand why learning early is important?

✓ Do I know why my doctors and medications matter?

✓ Do I understand that choosing Medicare involves much more than comparing monthly premiums?

If so...

You're ready for the next lesson.

Continue to Lesson 4

Understanding Medicare Enrollment Periods

Now that you understand your Medicare choices and know how to avoid common mistakes, it's time to learn when Medicare decisions can be made and how different enrollment periods work.

Timing is an important part of Medicare.

We'll explain it one step at a time.

Remember...

People rarely regret learning too much before making an important healthcare decision.

They sometimes regret learning too little.

That's why you're here.

One lesson at a time.