

# The Top 5 Medicare Dates You Can't Afford To Miss

When it comes to Medicare, missing key dates can lead to penalties, gaps in coverage, or unnecessary delays in getting the benefits you need.

## The 5 Must-Know Enrollment Periods

 <b>Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)</b>	 <b>Open Enrollment Period (OEP)</b>	 <b>Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period</b>	 <b>General Enrollment Period (GEP)</b>	 <b>Special Enrollment Periods (SEPs)</b>
<b>When it Happens:</b>	<b>When it Happens:</b>	<b>When it Happens:</b>	<b>When it Happens:</b>	<b>When it Happens:</b>
<b>Starts:</b> 3 months before your 65th birthday month. Includes your birth month. <b>Ends:</b> 3 months after your 65th birthday month.	Every year from <b>October 15 to December 7</b>	Annually from <b>January 1 to March 31</b>	Annually from <b>January 1 to March 31</b>	Available at various times due to specific circumstances  (e.g., moving, attaining Medicaid, or returning to the U.S. after living abroad).
<b>Why it Matters:</b>	<b>Why it Matters:</b>	<b>Why it Matters:</b>	<b>Why it Matters:</b>	<b>Why it Matters:</b>
This is your first opportunity to sign up for Medicare. Missing it could result in delayed coverage, penalties and a more difficult sign-up process in the future.	During this period, you can make changes to your Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C) and Prescription Drug Plan (Part D). You can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch from Original Medicare with Supplement over to Medicare Advantage or vice versa.</li> <li>• Change from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.</li> <li>• Change your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.</li> </ul>	This period is for people already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. You can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another.</li> <li>• Return to Original Medicare and enroll in a standalone Part D plan.</li> </ul>	If you miss your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) and don't qualify for a Special Enrollment Period such as 'ending employer based coverage', you can sign up during this period. However, this could result in a late enrollment penalty, and your coverage won't start until 1st day of the upcoming month.	If you qualify for an SEP, you can sign up for or make changes to your Medicare coverage outside the usual enrollment periods without facing penalties.
<b>What to Do:</b>	<b>What to Do:</b>	<b>What to Do:</b>	<b>What to Do:</b>	<b>What to Do:</b>
If you're turning 65, make sure to enroll during this window. If you're already receiving Social Security benefits, you'll automatically be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B. If not, you need to sign up online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review your current plan to see if it still meets your needs</li> <li>• If needed, make changes new plans take effect January 1.</li> </ul>	If you're unhappy with your Advantage plan, act now—this is your chance to change it.	Only use this period if you missed your Initial Enrollment Period	If you relocate to another county or state or experience another qualifying event, be sure to act quickly to avoid penalties. SEPs can last for 2-3 months, so watch for notices that you may qualify.

If you need further assistance and clarification please consider speaking with The Cronin Agency. We've had the pleasure of assisting thousands of clients and helping them navigate through all enrollment periods and circumstances. 603-969-7147