

Medicare Supplement Insurance

Medicare Supplement Insurance, also known as Medigap Insurance, is simply a secondary insurance to Medicare which pays for the 20% liability that Medicare doesn't cover. It is NOT a Medicare Advantage plan. Those are separate and distinct from what is sold at LCD Insurance.

It can help cover copayments, coinsurance and deductibles.

Below are a few things to know about Medicare Supplement Insurance (which are also listed on the Medicare website) are:

- You **must** have Medicare Part A and Part B.
- A Medigap policy is different from a Medicare Advantage Plan. Those plans are ways to get Medicare benefits, while a Medigap policy only supplements your Original Medicare benefits.
- You pay the private insurance company a monthly premium for your Medigap policy. You pay this monthly premium in addition to the monthly Part B premium that you pay to Medicare.
- A Medigap policy only covers one person. If you and your spouse both want Medigap coverage, you'll each have to buy separate policies.
- You can buy a Medigap policy from any insurance company that's licensed in your state to sell one.
- Any standardized Medigap policy is guaranteed renewable even if you have health problems. This means the insurance company can't cancel your Medigap policy as long as you pay the premium.
- Some Medigap policies sold in the past cover prescription drugs. But, Medigap policies sold after January 1, 2006 aren't allowed to include prescription drug coverage. If you want prescription drug coverage, you can join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Part D).
- It's illegal for anyone to sell you a Medigap policy if you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, unless you're switching back to Original Medicare.

Medicare Supplement Insurance (cont'd)

The Best Time to Enroll?

The most optimal time to enroll in a Medicare Supplement Insurance plan is during your Medigap Open Enrollment Period. This is the six-month period that begins on the first day of the month that you are BOTH 65 or older AND enrolled in Medicare Part B. Enrolling at this time is considered guaranteed issue, meaning that your medical history or pre-existing conditions cannot be used as a basis for charging you more for coverage or even denying you.

Once this enrollment period passes, you will find it more difficult obtaining coverage and it can be more expensive.

However, there are certain situations when you may have guaranteed-issue rights:

- Your Medigap insurance company goes bankrupt or misled you.
- Your Medigap coverage ends through no fault of your own.
- You are enrolled in Original Medicare while still working, so you also have an employer-sponsored group plan, and that employer coverage is now ending.
- You enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan at age 65 when you were first eligible for Medicare Part A, but changed your mind within the first year and want to return to Original Medicare.
- You dropped your Medigap plan to enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan for the first time, but changed your mind within the first year and want to return to Original Medicare.

If you are eligible for a Medicare Supplement Insurance plan, LCD Insurance Services can help you navigate through the sometimes confusing aspects of this secondary insurance, and help you find a plan that fits, and works with your budget.