



Revised April 2016

What to do if you no longer automatically qualify for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug costs

What's Extra Help?

Getting Extra Help means Medicare helps pay your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan's monthly premium, deductible, and copayments. You **automatically qualify** for Extra Help if you have one of these:

- Both Medicare and Medicaid
- Help from Medicaid paying your Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) premiums (belong to a Medicare Savings Program)
- Both Medicare and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Note: You need to join a Medicare drug plan to get Extra Help.

If I automatically qualify this year, will I qualify next year?

You may no longer qualify for Extra Help if your income and resources changed since last year and that caused you to no longer to qualify for one of the programs listed above.

You'll get a notice (on grey paper) in the mail along with an application and postage-paid envelope by the end of September if you no longer automatically qualify for Extra Help. The good news is, even if you get this notice, you may still qualify for Extra Help. You need to apply to find out. You can apply for Extra Help through Social Security or the Medicaid office in the state where you live. If you don't qualify, you'll have to start paying a monthly premium. If you don't make these payments, you may be disenrolled from your drug plan.

If you still qualify for Extra Help but the level you qualify for is changing in 2017, you'll get a notice (on orange paper) in the mail in early October that will show your new copayment amounts. If you don't get a notice from Medicare, then you'll get the same level of Extra Help in 2017 that you got for 2016, although your actual copayment amount may change due to yearly adjustments to the Extra Help program. You'll still get a notice from your drug plan letting you know what your copayments for 2017 will be.

If I no longer automatically qualify, what should I do?

You should **apply** for Extra Help if:

- Your yearly income is \$17,820 or less for an individual or \$24,030 or less for a married couple living together. Even if your yearly income is higher, you still may qualify if you or your spouse meet one of these conditions:
 - You support other family members who live with you.
 - You have earnings from work.
 - You live in Alaska or Hawaii.
- Your resources are \$13,640 or less for an individual or \$27,250 or less for a married couple living together. Resources include your savings and stocks, but not your home or car or the value of any life insurance you may have.

The above amounts are for 2016 and may change in 2017. If your income and resources are slightly higher, you should still apply.

How do I apply for Extra Help?

It's free to apply for Extra Help. Apply as soon as possible to make sure you get Extra Help starting January 1, 2017, if you qualify. There are 3 ways to apply:

1. Visit socialsecurity.gov/i1020.
2. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to apply by phone, get a paper application mailed to you, or make an appointment at your local Social Security office. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
3. Visit Medicare.gov/contacts or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and say "Medicaid" to apply through your Medicaid office. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

What if I still don't qualify for Extra Help?

If you don't qualify for Extra Help, look at other options for lowering your prescription drug coverage costs:

- Your state may have programs that can help pay your prescription drug costs. Contact your Medicaid office or State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for more information. Visit Medicare.gov/contacts for your Medicaid office phone number, and visit shiptacenter.org for your SHIP's phone number.

What if I still don't qualify for Extra Help? (continued)

- You may want to switch to a new Medicare drug plan for coverage starting January 1, 2017. See what your costs will be in 2016 for your current plan without the Extra Help. Compare other plans in your area to your current plan to see if you can save more money.

You can compare plans by visiting Medicare.gov/find-a-plan. Or, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for help. TTY users should call 1-800-486-2048. You can also call your State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) for assistance. Visit shiptacenter.org for your SHIP's phone number. When you're comparing plans, be sure the plan covers the prescriptions you take. Also see if you can continue to use your same pharmacy to fill prescriptions if using that pharmacy is important to you.

- If you no longer qualify for Extra Help for the following year, you have an additional opportunity to switch plans from January 1–March 31, 2017. Remember, you can re-apply for Extra Help at any time if your income and resources change.

For more information

For information about Extra Help, visit socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp. You also can call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

If you have questions about Medicare prescription drug coverage, here's what you can do:

- Read your "Medicare & You" handbook.
- Visit Medicare.gov.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE.
- Call your SHIP for free personalized health insurance counseling. Visit shiptacenter.org for your SHIP's phone number.

