APRIL 2024

AGING

What you need to know

BY HEALTH FOR ALL

WHEN TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE

Understanding the basics and navigating the system.

DIET LOWERS DIMENTIA RISK

Following the MIND diet may help slow down biological aging and reduce the risk of dementia, new research shows

HEART FAILURE - KNOW THE SIGNS

Every person can experience symptoms a little differently.

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AGING SARCOPENIA-WHAT IS IT?

Sarcopenia can negatively impact your daily activity and quality of life.

Understanding Medicare

When to Apply

Most people sign up for Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance) when they're first eligible, typically at age 65.

It's important to sign up promptly to avoid gaps in coverage or late enrollment penalties. However, if you're already covered through an employer group health plan, it might make sense to sign up for Medicare later or delay Part B.

If you are age 65 or older and receive Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled in Part A.

SIGN UP 3 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR 65th BIRTHDAY!

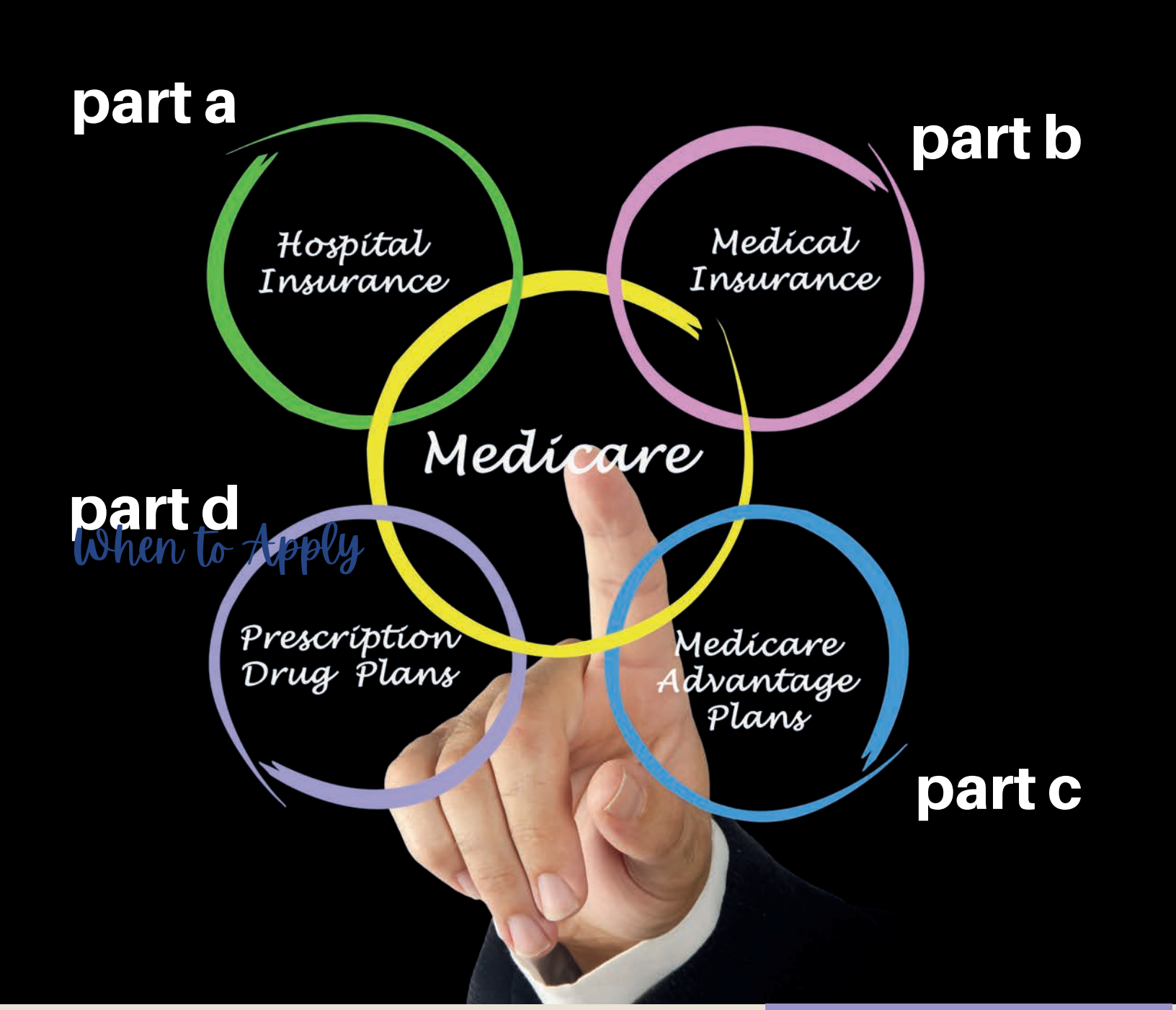
Apply at www.ssa.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE

Late Enrollment

- Penalties added to monthly premium
- NOT 1-time late fee
- Charged for as long as you have that type of coverage (lifetime penalty)
- Increases the longer you wait to sign up

If you or your spouse have health insurance through your job, you can sign up:

- Any time while working and still covered by the group health plan.
- Within 8 months of the day, you or your spouse stop working.
- Within 8 months of the group health plan ending while you continue to work.
- Your coverage begins the month after you sign up.



Information You Will Need

Basic information about yourself

- Social Security number
- Where you were born (city, state, country)

Health insurance information

- Start and end dates for any current group health plans
- Start and end dates for any group health plans after age 65

For Part B only

- Valid email address
- Your existing Medicare number

If you have paid Medicare taxes for fewer than 40 quarters, you'll have to pay premiums to receive Medicare Part A coverage.

In 2024, if you paid Medicare taxes for 30 to 39 quarters, you'll pay $278 a month for Part A. If you or your spouse paid Medicare taxes for fewer than 30 quarters, you'll pay $506 a month for Part A in 2023 and $505 in 2024.

New research suggests that following an eating plan called the MIND diet may slow down biological aging.

The MIND diet combines elements of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, focusing on preserving cognitive function.

According to Maggie Moon, MS, RD, brain health nutrition specialist and author of The MIND Diet, dementia affects around 10% of adults over 65 in the U.S., and diet is seen as a protective factor against cognitive decline.

The MIND diet encourages consumption of vegetables (both leafy and non-leafy), nuts, beans, berries, lean poultry, fish, and whole grains. It suggests using olive oil as the primary fat source and enjoying wine in moderation. The diet discourages red meat, butter, full-fat cheese, fried fast food, and sweets.

Research indicates that the MIND diet is linked to improvements in aging-related factors such as grip strength, mobility, and inflammation. It has also been associated with a potential delay in brain aging of up to 7.5 years.

A recent study further supports the relationship between the MIND diet and brain health, shedding light on why this eating plan may benefit cognitive function preservation.

MEAL PLAN: www.eastewart.com/nutrition-tips/mind-diet-meal-plan/

THE MIND DIET HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BOOST BRAIN HEALTH, SLOW COGNITIVE DECLINE, AND REDUCE THE RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE BY UP TO 53%

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Failure

Your heart's role is to pump blood, delivering oxygen and nutrients to your body's organs. Heart failure happens when your heart can't pump enough blood to meet your body's needs, leading to symptoms like shortness of breath, fatigue, and leg swelling.

Heart failure symptoms stem from two main causes: congestion due to backed-up blood flow and inadequate blood flow to the body (low output). Symptoms vary among individuals, with some experiencing mild or no symptoms, while others have severe symptoms, even at rest.

Recognizing these signs can guide you in knowing when to seek medical attention.

During heart failure, your body accumulates more fluid than it needs and forces your kidneys to retain water. The excess water retention can also cause a backup of fluid in other organs, like your lungs. As a result, you may experience the following congestion symptoms:

- Shortness of breath which often worsens when lying down
- Cough
- Wheezing
- Weight gain due to fluid retention
- Abdominal pain
- Difficulty performing physical activity or feeling more exhausted than usual after exercise
- Swelling in the legs and feet

Symptoms of Low Output

Low output occurs when your heart isn't providing enough blood flow to the rest of your organs. Your heart tends to fall into a low output state at later stages of heart failure. During this state, you may experience symptoms such as:

- Dizziness
- Cold, pale skin
- Chest pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite or feeling full soon after eating
- Fatigue
- Unintentional weight loss

When to Contact a Healthcare Provider

If you suspect you or a loved one are experiencing heart failure or may be at risk for heart complications, it's vital to see a healthcare provider to determine the cause of your symptoms. An easy way to remember the warning signs of heart failure is by using the acronym FACES, which stands for:

- Fatigue
- Activity limitation (feeling exhausted during physical activity)
- Congestion (due to fluid build-up)
- Edema (swelling)
- Shortness of breath

You should go to the ER if you experience chest pain along with other symptoms. This usually indicates a heart attack. Call 911 or get to the ER right away if you experience chest pain with:

- Shortness of breath
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Arrhythmia (irregular heartbeats)
- Sweating
- Chest pain that moves to include your arms, neck, or jaw
- Symptoms last more than five minutes
- Angina (squeezing, tightness, or crushing sensation in your chest)

What Is Sarcopenia?

Sarcopenia refers to the gradual decline in muscle mass and strength, often associated with aging. It is most commonly observed in older adults due to the natural aging process.

The prevalence of sarcopenia is estimated to be between 5-13% in individuals aged 60 years or older, and between 11-50% in those aged 80 years or older.

Sarcopenia can significantly impact daily activities and quality of life, leading to difficulties in walking, climbing stairs, and lifting heavy objects. It also increases the risk of falls and fractures.

Various tests are available to diagnose sarcopenia, focusing on muscle strength, quality, and physical performance.

Although there are no medications specifically approved for treating sarcopenia, lifestyle modifications can help manage the condition and restore muscle mass and strength**. Symptoms:**

- Impaired motor function
- Difficulty in walking
- Slow walking speed
- Difficulty in carrying and lifting heavy items
- Difficulty in climbing stairs
- Increase in falls
- Physical weakness

Causes

Various mechanisms can cause the onset of sarcopenia with aging, such as:

- Insulin resistance: Aging often causes changes in body composition, leading to increased accumulation of body fat and decreased muscle mass. Such changes can lead to insulin resistance and other metabolic dysfunctions.

- Decrease in hormone levels: Aging can lead to a reduction in levels of anabolic hormones such as insulin-like growth factor-1, human growth hormone, and testosterone. These hormones play important roles in the development and maintenance of muscle tissues, and so the hormones' decline can cause sarcopenia.

- Inflammatory markers: An increase in inflammatory markers such as interleukin (IL)-6, tumor necrosis factor-alpha, C-reactive protein, and IL-1 that occurs with aging can lead to sarcopenia due to their effect on skeletal muscles.

- Neurodegeneration: Aging causes a decrease in peripheral nerve fibers, motor neurons in the spinal cord, and the number of neuromuscular junctions. Such changes in the neurological system can cause sarcopenia.

Preventing Sarcopenia

Have a well-balanced diet with high-quality proteins
Consume 0.7-1 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight per day
Perform resistance exercises at least twice a week
Reduce sedentary time

Community Resources:

- Brazos Valley Aging & Disability Resource Center – 979-595-2831
- Brazos Valley Community Action Program – 979-595-2800
- Elder Aid of Brazos Valley – 979-823-5127
- Texas Department of Insurance – 800-252-3439
- Medicare – Help Line – 800-252-9240
- Alzheimer's Association – 800-272-3900
- Social Security Administration – Bryan, TX office number – 866-568-9428

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