INSURED AMERICAN & FAMILY

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Medicare Enrollment Windows

IEP, AEP, OEP, SEP, what each one means and when to use it

Medicare has windows. Miss them, and you can be locked in or penalized for life.

WHAT IT IS

Medicare doesn't work like other insurance, you can't just enroll or change plans whenever you want. There are specific windows that govern when you can sign up, switch plans, or drop coverage. Miss the wrong window and you can face permanent late penalties or be locked in for an entire year.

THE FOUR WINDOWS

IEP (Initial Enrollment Period), the 7 months around
your 65th birthday: 3 before, the month of, and 3 after.

AEP (Annual Enrollment Period), October 15 ,
December 7. Change MA or Part D plans for the following

year.
OEP (Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment), January

1, March 31. One change allowed if you're already on
MA.

SEP (Special Enrollment Period), triggered by qualifying
life events: moving, losing employer coverage, etc.

WHAT EACH ONE DOES

IEP: Sign up for Parts A, B, D, plus pick MA or Medigap.
AEP: Switch MA plans, switch Part D plans, or move

between MA and Original Medicare + Part D.
OEP: Move from MA back to Original Medicare, or switch MA

plans, one change only.
SEP: Enroll or change outside normal windows when life

changes.
Medigap Initial Enrollment Period: 6 months from Part B start, no medical underwriting.

THE 3 THINGS PEOPLE GET WRONG

1. **"I can change Medicare anytime."**
   You can't. The windows matter. Most of the year, you're locked into your current plan unless you have a Special Enrollment Period from a qualifying life event.
2. **"Late enrollment penalties go away if I just sign up later."**
   They don't. Part B and Part D late penalties stay with you for life, added to your monthly premium permanently.
3. **"Missing AEP isn't a big deal."**
   It is. You're locked in for the entire calendar year unless you have a SEP or you're on MA (and can use OEP once between Jan 1 , Mar 31).

PUT THESE ON YOUR CALENDAR:

Approaching 65: Call Craig 3 months before the month you turn 65. Every fall: AEP runs Oct 15, Dec 7.

Don't miss a window. Call or text Craig, I'll help find the best plan that fits your medical and financial needs.

Don't go underinsured when you can be Insured AF.