

HEALTH & H.O.P.E.

HELP ON PROCESSING EVERYTHING DIALYSIS

Medicare Open Enrollment



When is the Medicare Open Enrollment period?

Medicare Open Enrollment is from Oct. 15 to December 7, 2023. This is the time to compare your current coverage to your choices for 2024 and select the plan that best fits your needs and budget. Medicare's Open Enrollment period gives everyone with Medicare the opportunity to make changes

to their prescription drug plans or health plans for coverage beginning January 1, 2024.

How do I know if I need to change plans?

Review the materials your Medicare health or drug plan sends you, such as the "Evidence of Coverage" (EOC) and "Annual Notice of Change" (ANOC) documents. Your current

costs and benefits may change. If there are any changes to your plan, then make sure it will meet your needs for the next year. If you do not need to change your plan and it's still being offered, then no action is required.

Where can I find my Medicare plan details or compare plans?
1-800-MEDICARE or [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov).

Where can I find helpful facts about Medicare Open Enrollment?

CMS has materials for [English-speaking](#), [Spanish-speaking](#), and [other audiences](#) that can help you with Medicare open enrollment.

How to Take Care of Your Vascular Access

It is important to take care of your vascular access and make sure it works right. There are three kinds of vascular accesses:

- **Fistula** – made by joining an artery and vein in your arm.
- **Graft** – made by using a piece of soft tube to join an artery and vein in your arm.
- **Catheter** – a soft tube placed in a large vein, usually in your neck.

Here are some tips for everyday care and preventing access issues.

1. **Become informed.** Read all the information your health care team gives you.

2. **Keep your access area clean.**

- **Fistula/Graft** – Wash your hands before and after you touch your fistula or graft. Wash with a germ-destroying soap before every dialysis treatment. Do not scratch your skin or pick the scab.
- **Catheter** – Do not touch your access dressing. Keep your catheter dressing clean and dry. Make sure your health care team changes the dressing at each dialysis treatment.

3. **Do not sleep on your access.**

Lying on your fistula or graft puts pressure on it and can cause it to clot.

4. **Do not wear tight clothes or jewelry on your access arm.**

This can cause pressure, and your access might become clotted.

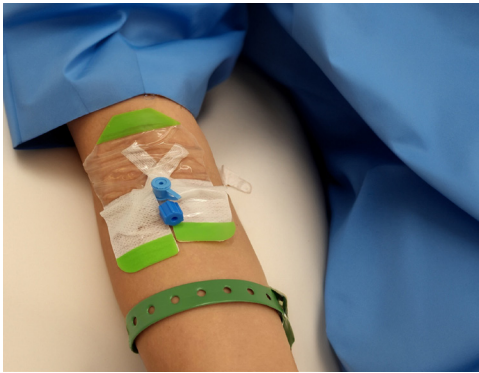
5. **Do not carry heavy items.** Do not carry heavy items on your access arm, such as groceries or purses. This can cause your access to become damaged.

6. **Feel the thrill.** Check the blood flow many times each day by feeling for a regular, buzzing vibration. If you do not feel this, or there is a change, call your doctor or health care team.

7. Listen for the bruit (“brew-ee”).

Put your ear to your access or use a stethoscope to listen. A regular swishing sound means everything is working well. Call your doctor or health care team at once if you hear a whistling sound or if the swishing sound is not regular or pulsing.

8. Be your advocate. Do not let anyone use a blood pressure cuff or draw blood on your access arm. Never let anyone use your access arm for anything other than dialysis.



ESRD 8 and 14 Website Update

Alliant Health Solutions has updated its [Quality website](#) to make finding patient-friendly and provider-friendly resources even easier. Website visitors can now use the website's filter to quickly find patient-friendly or provider-friendly resources, events, and blog posts. These resources and events will also be shown with the special icons below.



Patient-Friendly



Provider-Friendly

The Risks of Missing Dialysis Treatments

Dialysis treatments are important to your health. You should never skip your treatments. Getting the right amount of dialysis ensures that your blood is cleaned well enough to stay healthy.



Missing dialysis treatment can cause many problems, such as fluid overload, cramping, headaches, low blood pressure, nausea, high potassium, high phosphorus, and shortness of breath. You may not always feel the effects of missing a treatment, but it is harming your health. Missing treatments can also lead to unplanned hospital visits or death.

To learn more about the risks of missing dialysis treatments, click on the links below:

- [Don't Play Games with Your Health - The Dangerous Domino Effect of Missing Treatments](#)
- [Why to Comply Missing Dialysis](#)
- [Guide to a Healthier You](#)

Staying Healthy on the Kidney Transplant Waitlist

As you go through and finish all the kidney transplant requirements, your trip doesn't end once you are on the waitlist.

You must stay healthy for surgery and be ready when a kidney becomes available. Key items to keep you healthy while on the waitlist are:



1. Be on time for your dialysis treatments.
2. Take your medications as ordered by your doctor.
3. Stay up to date with the screening test and blood work your transplant center calls for.
4. Stay in touch with your transplant team and update them with any insurance or health changes.
5. Don't use any tobacco products.
6. Exercise keeping with your doctor's advice.

Setting Life Goals

"If you go to work on your goals, your goals will go to work on you. If you go to work on your plan, your plan will go to work for you. Whatever good thing we build ends up building us."

– Jim Rohn, American entrepreneur and writer

Creating life goals can help make your life better. Life goals are all the things you want to finish in your life. Your facility social worker can work with you on setting life goals. Below are some resources to help with goal setting. In addition, our Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) has provided tips for creating and meeting life goals.

Resources:

Life Plan template - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) Life Plan Match Game - [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Quotes from the ESRD Network 8 and 14 Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) members

The goal I set for myself is to always keep an open mind in every situation so I can look at the opportunity that I proposed for myself from every angle possible, even if I have to pick the wiser brains of others.

To reach my goals, I am doing an assessment honestly on whether I am sticking to the plan. If I have deviated in any way, I find the cause to fix the flaw in the plan to get back on track.

To stay on track, I am doing an inventory of what I currently have and what I currently need that can put me one step closer to my goal.

– Christine G.

The goal I set for myself was to learn sign language. To reach my goal, I attended sign language classes. To stay on track, I am attending the Silent Church to fellowship with people in the deaf community.

– Nichole J.



GOALS

Healthy Turkey Soup Recipe

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon olive oil
½ pound cooked ground turkey, 93% lean
½ sweet onion, chopped
1 teaspoon garlic, minced
4 cups water
1 cup low sodium chicken or turkey stock
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 carrot, sliced thin
½ cup green cabbage, shredded
½ cup bulgur
2 dried bay leaves
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh sage, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped
A pinch of red pepper flakes
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Directions:

1. Place a large saucepan over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Sauté the turkey for about 5 minutes or until the meat is cooked through.
2. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for about 3 minutes or until the vegetables are softened. Add the water, chicken stock, celery, carrot, cabbage, bulgur, and bay leaves.
3. Bring the soup to a boil and then reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 35 minutes or until the bulgur and vegetables are tender.
4. Remove the bay leaves and stir in the parsley, sage, thyme, and red pepper flakes.
5. Season with black pepper and serve.

Makes 6 servings

124 calories per serving
Carbohydrates 8g
Sugar 2g
Fiber 2g
Calcium 27mg
Fat 5g
Saturated fat 1g

Trans fat 0g
Protein 11g
Phosphorus 102mg
Cholesterol 41mg
Sodium 89mg
Potassium 207mg

Source: [Turkey-Bulgur Soup](#) – American Kidney Fund; KidneyKitchen

To file a grievance, contact the following agencies:

ESRD Network 8 - Phone: 1-877-936-9260; Email: nw8info@allianthealth.org;
Mail: 775 Woodlands Pkwy, Suite 310, Ridgeland, MS 39157;
Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw8/> –
For patients and facilities in AL, MS, TN

ESRD Network 14 – Office: 972-503-3215; fax: 972-503-3219; Toll-free: 877-886-4435;
Email: nw14info@allianthealth.org Mail: 4099 McEwen Rd, Suite 820, Dallas, TX 75244;
Website: <https://quality.allianthealth.org/topic/esrd-nw14/> - For patients and facilities in TX

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