

# Dear Marci



Your trusted source for Medicare answers.

## Topic of the Month: Medicare and Medicaid

*This week in Marci . . .*

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## Dear Marci,

**I have Medicare but a friend told me I might also qualify for Medicaid to help pay for my health care costs. What is Medicaid and how does it work with Medicare?**

– Ned (Helena, MT)

*Click on the blue, underlined [hyperlinks](#) for related information available through Medicare Interactive!*

Dear Ned,

If you have a low income, you may qualify for certain Medicaid programs in your state, depending on your health care needs. [Medicaid](#) is a federal and state program that covers medical care for certain people with low incomes. Each state runs several different Medicaid-funded programs for different groups of people.

If you qualify for a Medicaid program, Medicare will pay first for your health care and Medicaid will pay second. In many cases, for services that both Medicare and Medicaid



## Spotlight on Resources

- Find answers to your questions about Medicare health plan options on [Medicare Interactive](#).
- For information about services and resources for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit the [National Association of Area Agencies on Aging](#).
- For free one-on-one counseling and assistance with Medicare and related issues, contact your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#).

can cover (such as doctors' visits, hospital care, home care and skilled nursing facility care), Medicaid will prevent or protect you from owing your doctor or hospital any Medicare coinsurances and copayments.

Medicaid may also pay for some additional services that Medicare does not cover, such as dental care or transportation to and from doctors' appointments. Depending on which program you qualify for, Medicaid may cover extended [long-term care](#) services.

➔ **To find out more about how Medicare works with Medicaid, visit [Medicare Interactive](#).**

**–Marci**

- For help getting screened for benefit programs available to older adults with limited incomes, visit [Benefits Check Up](#).
- For state-by-state information about Medicaid benefits, visit the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#).

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**Looking for past Dear Marci Answers?** Have other Medicare questions? Find your answers with Medicare Interactive (MI), an independent, public resource of the Medicare Rights Center. MI offers expert information and advice on Medicare. [Visit Medicare Interactive today!](#)

**Do you need individual counseling?** Call the Medicare Rights Center's consumer hotline at **800-333-4114**, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. A Medicare counselor will be happy to answer your question.

You can also call your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program \(SHIP\)](#) for personal counseling on Medicare benefits, rights and options. Call [Social Security](#) (800-772-1213) for questions about enrolling in Medicare or applying for Extra Help!

Feel free to [send comments](#) about *Dear Marci* or suggestions about topics you would like *Dear Marci* to cover.



**The Medicare Rights Center's Professional Hotline**

Do you help people with Medicare? Where do you turn to for help? Call the Professional Hotline, a national service offered by the Medicare Rights Center to support people serving the Medicare population. Dial 877-794-3570 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time for accurate, up-to-date information and ongoing technical support.

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## Health Tip of the Week

Now that the holidays are over, it is a good time to start the year by de-stressing and being nicer to your body after the inevitable end-of-year feasting. Here are some tips for keeping your liver healthy to help you feel brand new:

- **Put the alcohol and caffeine down:** Too much caffeine can raise blood pressure, and severely impact the liver, while too much alcohol increases the production of [acetaldehyde](#), a toxic by-product of alcohol breakdown that destroys liver cells.
- **Be pro antioxidants:** [Antioxidants](#) neutralize harmful free radicals and reduce damage to cells, including



**Want to learn about the choices you have when you become eligible for Medicare?**

Check out the Medicare Rights Center's next FREE educational web seminar, "**Medicare Options**" to learn about your Medicare choices.

[Register now](#) for this online presentation.

liver cells. All fruits and vegetables are full of antioxidants, but dark green and red ones (think kale and strawberries) are particularly rich.

- **Be complex:** Whole foods are better for you than processed foods and have less toxins that make it to the liver. Strive for a diet full of [complex carbohydrates](#) (brown rice), [lean protein](#) (beans, lentils, eggs, chicken, fish and a little lean red meat) and organic fruits and vegetables.

For more tips on keeping your liver healthy, visit [WomenFitness.net](#) and [Natural Awakenings Magazine](#). Being choosy with what you eat is a small part of staying healthy. To find out which preventive services are covered by Medicare, visit [Medicare Interactive](#).

## Survey Says . . .

In a new [study](#) in the journal [BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth](#), a team of researchers from the department of ambulatory care and prevention at Harvard Medical School and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care found that body image has an effect on whether women gain weight during pregnancy.

The study found that overweight and obese women who thought they weighed less than they actually did at the start of pregnancy had seven times the odds of gaining excessive weight during their pregnancy. By contrast, normal-weight women who thought they weighed more had twice the odds of gaining excessive weight.

The Institute of Medicine [recommends](#) that normal weight women gain 25-35 pounds during pregnancy, and overweight or obese women gain 15-25 pounds. Over 50 percent of the 1,537 women in the Harvard study gained in excess of these recommendations.

The reasons for misperceived body weight were unclear. But researchers speculated that the country's high rate of obesity might contribute to the perception held by overweight and obese women that they are normal weight. This perception might make them less likely to follow pregnancy weight-gain guidelines. They also conjectured that a high-rate of "disordered eating behaviors" among normal weight women who perceived themselves overweight might contribute to their weight gain during pregnancy.

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***Dear Marci* is a weekly e-newsletter designed to keep you—people with Medicare, social workers, health care providers and other professionals—in the loop about health care benefits, rights and options for older Americans and people with disabilities. *Dear Marci* is a free service of the [Medicare Rights Center](#).**

For a summary of the study, visit [Reuters](#).

To find out how Medicare covers medical nutritional therapy, visit [Medicare Interactive](#).

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**The Medicare Rights Center** (MRC) is the largest independent source of Medicare information and assistance in the United States. Founded in 1989, MRC helps older adults and people with disabilities get high-quality, affordable health care.

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