

Is COBRA insurance the best option for me?

If you're recently unemployed and have been offered COBRA coverage, you have the opportunity to continue with your employer-sponsored insurance, which allows you to maintain health benefits. Here's our quick guide on COBRA coverage for you to refer back to at any time.

How much does COBRA cost?

COBRA coverage allows you to continue on your current health insurance plan. While you are employed, your employer typically pays all or most of your premium for your group health plan. With COBRA you pay your own monthly premiums and out-of-pocket expenses. In 2015, the [average worker paid about \\$89 per month](#) as a premium for single coverage. Employers paid about 4.5 times that amount for the remainder of the premium. At that rate, that means you might pay around \$521 a month, plus an additional \$10.42 in administrative fees.

Health insurance options for the unemployed

If you lose your job, you have some options for health insurance, but you only have [60 days](#) to decide:

- Elect COBRA continuation coverage through your former employer
- Visit the Marketplace to find plans available and affordable to you
- Purchase private insurance
- Remain uninsured

Failing to have health insurance not only puts you at risk physically but financially. For example, [a broken leg may cost you up to \\$7,500 and on average a 3-day hospital stay costs roughly \\$30,000](#). Plus, without qualifying health insurance, you could be fined under the ACA "[Individual Responsibility Mandate](#)" during tax season — which can cost 2.5% of your household income or \$695 per person.

Enrolling through the Marketplace

Losing your job-based health insurance qualifies you to enroll anytime throughout the year. The Marketplace includes several affordable plan options based on your anticipated income for the year. An estimated 8 out of 10 people who choose a Marketplace plan pay less than \$100 a month as a premium, in large part due to tax credits and financial subsidies. You may qualify for low or no-cost Medicare benefits based on your state, household size, and projected income.

If you need additional information or help to navigate your health care options after employment, you can [call or make an appointment](#) with a HealthSherpa Consumer Advocate.