

Is COBRA Right for Me?

By insureguru

Consider COBRA if:

- You are pregnant or plan to become pregnant within the COBRA coverage period
- You have a pre-existing medical condition
- You are taking prescription medications, need a medical procedure in the near future, or need extensive medical care.
- You have recently been denied private health insurance

Consider an individual or family plan if:

- You are in relatively good health
- The COBRA option is too expensive
- You need health insurance coverage beyond the COBRA term (typically 18 months)
- You need a low-cost, short-term plan such as a 90-day individual health plan

Remember:

1. You can mix and match your COBRA benefits with individual alternatives.

For example:

If you have a pre-existing condition, you can choose COBRA coverage for yourself and a less expensive individual plan for your spouse.

If your child is about to lose her “Dependent Child” status, consider looking into a short-term individual plan that provides coverage while she transitions to college, employment, etc.

2. While there are less expensive health plans than your COBRA benefits, you can be denied coverage in most states if you have certain pre-existing conditions. COBRA may be more expensive, but you cannot be denied coverage based on a pre-existing condition.

3. If you are relatively healthy and are not pregnant, it's a good idea to explore the other health insurance options. You could save hundreds of dollars per month.

Other Options:

- COBRA with government subsidy: See eNetinsurance's COBRA Subsidy page for more information.
- Check your spouse's plan: If you're married and your spouse is employed, check to see if you can get coverage under your spouse's employer-sponsored plan. Find out if your spouse's share of the premium would increase if you were to join the plan. Some employer-sponsored plans allow for non-married employees to add their long-term partners to the plan.
- Short-term coverage: Some short-term plans may cost less and be easier to qualify for. Short-term health insurance policies typically last for six months, but they have limitations. These plans often do not count as a continuation of creditable coverage and often don't cover pre-existing medical conditions. However, they do provide a measure of financial protection in the event of a medical

emergency.

Explore public programs:

1. If none of these options work for you, check the Foundation for Health Coverage Education (FHCE) website. The Foundation's U.S. Uninsured Help Line can refer you to publicly-funded programs in your state. More than 90 percent of individuals who contact the FHCE find coverage. Logon to www.coverageforall.com, or call the Foundation, toll-free at 800-234-1317.

2. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services offers information about COBRA provisions for public-sector employees. You can contact them at:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop C1-22-06 Baltimore, MD 21244-1850 1-877-267-2323 x61565