

Benefits and Me



October 2024

Flexible Spending Accounts



A flexible spending account (FSA) is a beneficial tool for saving money on health care because it contains pre-tax dollars contributed each pay period to pay for qualified medical and dental expenses.

An important provision of an FSA is that most of the money contributed within a calendar year (and any applicable grace period) must be spent within the same year, or it will be lost. Toward the end of the year, it's common for many people to rush to use up leftover funds in their FSAs while they still can. Many people stock up on over-the-counter (OTC) drugs; others may concentrate on using those funds for medical expenses they've been putting off. For example, you could schedule a teeth cleaning if you haven't been to the dentist all year. If there is a screening or procedure you've been putting off, use FSA funds for that. The goal is to use that money to keep yourself healthy.

Talk to your HR representative for a full list of eligible FSA expenses.

Direct Primary Care and You

Innovative solutions are emerging to reduce rising health care costs. One such solution is direct primary care (DPC). In this model, you pay a monthly membership to a DPC provider that covers most of what the average patient needs, including office visits and drugs at lower prices, instead of accepting insurance for a routine visit. As a result, DPC can provide substantial savings to patients.

Because they don't operate under the typical fee-for-service model, many DPC providers are able to spend more time with their patients. Research shows that patients who have a good relationship with their doctor receive better care and are happier with the care they receive.

Many may wonder if they still need health insurance if using DPC—the answer is yes. It's strongly recommended to have some form of insurance to protect yourself financially in the event of an emergency. DPC is for primary care, so it doesn't cover catastrophic injuries, surgeries or emergency room visits.

Contact HR if you have questions about how your health insurance can work with DPC.

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Picking a Health Plan

Health insurance may be one of the most critical annual purchases you make since it impacts your physical, mental and financial wellness. Knowing the following common mistakes when choosing a health plan can help you avoid them and choose the best coverage for your situation:

- Rushing through enrollment options
- Overlooking important policy documents
- Misunderstanding costs (e.g., deductible, copay and coinsurance)

- Concealing your medical history
- Ignoring add-ons
- Selecting insufficient coverage

Health insurance is an essential investment for you and your family. Contact your manager if you have more questions about health plans.

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