



Getting Medicare right

Buying a Wheelchair or Scooter

Discuss With Your Doctor

- Before you get a wheelchair or scooter, you'll need to have a face-to-face examination with your doctor. The doctor may refer you to see an occupational or physical therapist to help review your need for a wheelchair or scooter.
- Your doctor will determine the type of wheelchair or scooter you need and write a prescription.
- Ask your doctor if there are specific models or types of wheelchairs or scooters that would be best for you.

Finding a Wheelchair or Scooter

- Make sure the model your doctor prescribes fits your needs. If you have special mobility needs or other health issues, the doctor should take these into account.
- Make sure the company you buy the wheelchair or scooter from does a home assessment to check that you'll be able to use it in your home. For example, they'll check that it fits through your doorways.
- If there are different sizes, be sure that the size that you get is a good fit for your height and weight, and is comfortable for you.
- Look into the reputation of the wheelchair or scooter and of its manufacturer. One place you can find product reviews is on the United Spinal Association's website www.usatechguide.org/

Buying or Renting

- Depending on the type of wheelchair or scooter you need, you may have the option of buying or renting it.
- If you choose to rent a wheelchair or scooter, ownership will transfer to you after you rent it for 13 months.
- Think about how long you'll need it, and how the rental costs will add up over the 13-month rental period.

Find a supplier

- Suppliers are where you can buy or rent medical equipment, devices and supplies. They may be pharmacies or other medical supply companies.
- Medicare only covers Durable Medical Equipment such as wheelchairs and scooters from Medicare-certified suppliers. You can find a Medicare-certified supplier by calling 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) or at www.medicare.gov

Other Important Things to Consider

- Medicare only covers one wheelchair or scooter at a time.
- Medicare only covers a wheelchair or scooter replacement once every five years except in limited circumstances.
- Medicare covers wheelchair and scooter repairs. When you're renting, there's no extra charge to you for repairs because they're part of the rental agreement. Make sure there are suppliers in your area that can repair your vehicle.
- Medicare covers replacement batteries for your motorized vehicle if necessary.
- You may need to perform day-to-day maintenance on your wheelchair or scooter. Ask your supplier what you should do to take good care of your equipment.

How to Get Medicare Coverage of your Wheelchair or Scooter

If you have Original Medicare

- Make sure you meet all of Medicare's requirements to get coverage. Coverage rules are different for each type of equipment, but you should talk to your doctor and call Medicare to ask how to get your equipment covered.
- Buy or rent your equipment from a supplier who accepts Medicare. If you go to a supplier who isn't enrolled in the Medicare program, you'll have to pay the full cost of your wheelchair or scooter yourself.
- To pay the lowest cost, use a supplier that takes assignment. Taking assignment means they accept the Medicare-approved amount for your equipment as the full payment. Suppliers who don't take Medicare assignment may charge you above Medicare's rates and ask for payment up front.
- In certain areas, the coverage rules are different because of a new competitive bidding process that Medicare is testing. In those areas, you must use contract suppliers in order for Medicare to cover your equipment. This applies to parts of: North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Florida, Pennsylvania and California. If you live in one of these states, call Medicare to find a contract supplier where you can buy or rent your equipment.
- In certain states, you need to get prior authorization from Original Medicare before you buy or rent a power wheelchair or scooter. Call 800-MEDICARE to find out whether you need prior approval.

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan

- If you're in a Medicare Advantage plan (like an HMO or PPO), your costs and coverage are different than Original Medicare. Check with the plan to find out how it covers wheelchairs and scooters. Also find out how much you'll have to pay.
- Ask if you need to get prior authorization for your wheelchair or scooter.
- Find out which suppliers are in your plan's network.

Wheelchair / Scooter Checklist

Fill out this sheet to make sure you get a wheelchair or scooter that fits your needs and that Medicare will cover. This checklist is for you to use. You don't need to give it to anyone else.

Date of face-to-face visit with my doctor: _____

Type of vehicle I need: ☐ Manual Wheelchair ☐ Power Wheelchair ☐ Scooter

Model: Manufacturer:

Does this model fit my height and weight? Yes No

Is it appropriate for use around my home? Yes No

What will I need to do to take care of it?

Is the wheelchair or scooter new? Yes No

If not, does it seem like it will last for five years? Yes No

Medicare generally only covers wheelchair or scooter replacements once every five years.

Do I need to get prior authorization?	Yes	No
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How will my costs differ if I rent or buy?

Do I plan to rent or buy?	Rent	Buy
How much do you want to spend each month?		
What are your monthly expenses?		
What are your long-term goals?		
Are you planning to move soon?		
Do you have enough money for a down payment?		
Is there anything else you need to consider?		

Supplier I will buy this wheelchair or scooter from:

Is this supplier near where I live? Yes No

If not, is there someone nearby who can repair my vehicle? Yes No

Am I comfortable with this supplier's expertise and reputation? Yes No

If you have **Original Medicare**

Does this supplier take Medicare assignment? Yes No

If not, am I willing to pay more for the vehicle? Yes No

Do I live in a competitive bidding area? (see previous page) Yes No

If so, is this a contract supplier? Yes No

If you have a **Medicare Advantage plan** (like an HMO or PPO)

Is this supplier in my plan's network? Yes No