

COBRA or Marketplace?

A practical checklist for comparing your options after job-based health coverage ends.

Use this before you choose.

COBRA may preserve familiar coverage. A Marketplace plan may offer different premiums or financial assistance. The better fit depends on your timing, household and healthcare needs.

1. Mark the dates first

- ☐ My employer coverage ends or ended on: _____
- ☐ My COBRA election deadline is: _____
- ☐ I checked my Marketplace Special Enrollment Period deadline.
- ☐ I confirmed the effective date of any new plan before ending other coverage.

Marketplace enrollment after loss of qualifying job-based coverage is generally time-limited. HealthCare.gov says people may qualify within the 60 days before or after the loss. Documentation may be required.

2. Gather the comparison details

- ☐ COBRA notice and total monthly premium
- ☐ Marketplace plan premiums after any estimated financial assistance
- ☐ Deductible, copays, coinsurance and out-of-pocket maximum
- ☐ Current doctors, hospitals, specialists and treatment facilities
- ☐ Prescriptions, dosage and preferred pharmacy
- ☐ Expected appointments, procedures or ongoing treatment

COBRA may deserve a closer look when...

You want continuity with the same plan, have already met part of the deductible, need access to the current network, or have ongoing treatment that could be disrupted.

Marketplace may deserve a closer look when...

The full COBRA premium is difficult to afford, you may qualify for savings, or an available individual plan fits your doctors, prescriptions and expected care.

3. Ask these questions before enrolling

- [] Are my doctors and facilities in network for this exact plan?
- [] Are my prescriptions covered, and do prior authorization or step-therapy rules apply?
- [] How much could I realistically pay during the remainder of this calendar year?
- [] Will changing plans restart my deductible or out-of-pocket progress?
- [] If my income changes, do I know how to update my Marketplace application?
- [] If I elect COBRA now, when could I move to a Marketplace plan later?

Important: Voluntarily ending COBRA early does not usually create a new Marketplace enrollment opportunity. Confirm eligibility and new coverage dates before canceling existing coverage.

My quick comparison

	COBRA	Marketplace plan
Monthly premium		
Deductible remaining		
Out-of-pocket maximum		
Doctors/facilities verified		
Prescriptions verified		
Coverage start date		

Want help comparing the tradeoffs?
Contact Copperline Benefits at 801.810.4625.
copperlinebenefits.com

Educational information only; not legal or tax advice. Eligibility, deadlines, plan availability and effective dates vary. Sources reviewed September 2026: HealthCare.gov, “COBRA coverage when you’re unemployed” and “Special Enrollment Periods.” Copperline Benefits is not affiliated with or endorsed by the federal government or the Health Insurance Marketplace®.