



# Benefits and Me



## 4 Tips for Reducing Your Health Care Costs in 2022

Health care costs continue to rise each year, and 2022 will likely be no exception. Experts predict a 6.5% increase this year in medical expenses alone. Consider the following four tips to reduce your health care costs this year:

1. **Pick an affordable health plan that addresses your unique needs.**  
When deciding on a plan, pick one that meets your budget and health care needs. To reduce your overall spending, it's also critical to know what your health plan does and doesn't cover.
2. **Stay in network.** With health plans, your health insurance company partners with select providers to lower care costs. If you go elsewhere (out of network), you will not have these discounts.
3. **Plan and budget your care.** Think about your potential upcoming health care costs, review your plan coverages and budget accordingly.
4. **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your doctor questions. If you require care, ask them if there are comparable procedures or services that are more affordable while still effective.

Don't simply avoid the doctor. Instead, take meaningful steps to lower your costs without risking your health. If you reduce your quality of care, it may end up costing you more in the long run.

## Staying Healthy to Prevent Severe COVID-19

With much of everyday life reopening, you may be wondering how to keep yourself healthy amid the pandemic. There's a direct relationship between your diet, physical activity and overall health, so lifestyle choices like the following could potentially lower your risk of serious COVID-19 complications:

- Eat a nutritious diet rich in healthy grains, fruits, vegetables and fiber.
- Get quality sleep and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.
- Work out regularly to lower your chance of becoming severely ill and to help you recover more quickly.

A healthy lifestyle can help you avoid disease in general, and being up to date on your COVID-19 vaccine doses is the best way to prevent severe illness related to COVID-19. Monitor your health daily, and contact your doctor if you have any concerns.

## Health FSA Basics

A flexible spending account (FSA) is an employer-sponsored savings account used to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care expenses. A health care FSA limits employee contributions to \$2,850 for 2022.

Consider these FSA basics:

- You could use FSA funds to pay for deductibles and copayments for your plan, but not the premium.
- You could use FSA funds to pay for other qualified health costs, such as eye exams, contact lenses and hearing exams.
- You are not taxed on the money put into the FSA.
- FSA funds typically must be used within a year or they are forfeited, but, depending on the plan, you may be able to carry over a portion of FSA funds into the following year.