

Premiums, deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums

Easy · 15 min to read · Free

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Each plan's Summary of Benefits and Coverage (SBC)
- ☐ A rough idea of how much care you use: visits, prescriptions, anything planned

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 Premium: a monthly amount you pay for coverage whether you use care or not.** Multiply by 12 for the yearly cost.
- 2 Deductible: with a \$2,000 deductible, you pay the first \$2,000 of covered services yourself.** Many plans pay for some services, like a checkup, before you meet it, and all Marketplace plans fully cover certain preventive care. Some plans have a separate deductible for prescriptions.
- 3 Copay and coinsurance: after the deductible, you usually pay a fixed copayment, like \$30, or coinsurance, a percentage like 20%, and the plan pays the rest.** If the plan's allowed amount for a visit is \$100 and your coinsurance is 20%, you pay \$20 once you've met your deductible, and the full \$100 if you haven't.
- 4 Out-of-pocket maximum: once your deductibles, copays and coinsurance for in-network care reach this amount, the plan pays 100% of covered benefits for the rest of the plan year.** For Marketplace plans it can be no more than \$10,600 for one person or \$21,200 for a family in 2026, and \$12,000 or \$24,000 in 2027.
- 5 Know what doesn't count toward the max: your premiums, services the plan doesn't cover, out-of-network care, and charges above the plan's allowed amount.**
- 6 Get the SBC for every plan you're considering.** Insurers and job-based plans must give you this short, plain-language Summary of Benefits and Coverage, which makes apples-to-apples comparisons possible. You can ask for it any time.

Watch out The cheapest monthly premium isn't always the cheapest plan. Generally, lower premiums come with higher deductibles and coinsurance. Look at your total yearly spending, not just the premium.

DAD NOTE *Know your deductible before you need it. Finding out in the ER waiting room is the expensive way.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/money/insurance/premiums-deductibles-and-out-of-pocket-maximums/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: HealthCare.gov.