

# Making Changes To Your Health Plan

When it's time to enroll in a health plan, it can be a tricky proposition. You need to make a pretty accurate guess at what your needs will be for the coming year as well as whether you can expect any major changes in your lifestyle. With most health plans, you are locked in for a year once you sign up; there are usually some circumstances under which changes can be made, however. It's important to know when you can and cannot make changes, so that you are prepared.

## Changes Allowed Mid-term

There are a few special circumstances under which you can make changes to your policy midway through the policy term. These are generally major life events such as:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Birth of a child
- Adoption
- Death of an insured person

You should check with your insurance company to ascertain which events qualify for mid-term policy changes. Even in these special circumstances, you have a limited period of time in which to make the changes to your policy. In most cases it is 30 days, but you should always double check with your insurance company to be sure you don't miss the deadline. It may seem obvious, but these are busy times and sometimes even very difficult times, and it can be easy to forget. If you miss the deadline you may have to wait until the policy renews to make the change-your new baby or spouse may have to go without coverage for that period.

## Making Changes At Renewal

When your health insurance policy comes up for renewal you should take another look at your coverage and see if you might need to make changes for the coming year. You should always take a moment to consider any potential health issues that might arise. Are you planning to become pregnant? Will you need any testing or treatment you have been putting off? Now is the time to give your health plan an overhaul if needed.

You can't change your policy mid-term simply because you are pregnant and didn't think you needed maternity coverage. Unfortunately, you won't be able to add it once the baby is on the way. So be sure that you have the right coverage for every possible eventuality. Thinking ahead, and not just renewing your policy automatically and without considering the ramifications, can save you a lot of money-and a lot of stress as well.