# **Reaching Retirement Age? Here’s What You Need to Know**

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Every birthday deserves celebration, but some seem a little more special than others. Think of a baby’s first birthday. Sweet 16. The “Big 4-0.” Then, before you know it, along comes 65. This last milestone is especially important to retirees.

For nearly half a century, American workers looked to 65 as the age at which they could stop working and finally reap their full retirement benefits under the Social Security Act of 1935.

Today, however, the full retirement age is now 66 or 67, depending on when you were born. In 1983, Congress changed the law to increase the retirement age gradually over a 22-year period, citing improvements in the health of older people and increases in average life expectancy. To find out your full retirement age, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/ageincrease.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/ageincrease.html?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-001&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

If you’ve contributed enough to the Social Security system through payroll taxes, you still can claim your retirement benefits at 65 — or 62, 63, or 64, for that matter — but your monthly payments will be permanently reduced. For help deciding which age is right for you to start receiving Social Security retirement benefits, read, “*When to Start Receiving Retirement Benefits*” at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10147.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10147.pdf?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-002&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

We have also made applying for benefits easier than ever. You can do it online! To apply for benefits, please go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-003&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

That said, age 65 should still factor in prominently as you prepare for retirement and a stable financial future, because that’s when most American workers first become eligible for Medicare health insurance coverage.

To see if you’ve earned enough credits through work to qualify for Medicare at age 65, view your *Social Security Statement* online using your personal *my* *Social Security* account. Create or log on to your account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-004&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

If you’re already receiving Social Security benefits before age 65, we’ll automatically enroll you in Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Medicare Part B (supplemental medical insurance) effective the first day of the month you turn 65. Watch your mailbox a few months before your birthday for your Medicare card. Otherwise, three months before your 65th birthday, you can apply for Medicare Parts A and B online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyforbenefits?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-005&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

Your Initial Enrollment Period for Medicare starts three months before your 65th birthday month and continues for three months after. To learn more about Medicare enrollment and coverage, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-006&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18). To learn more about Medicare coverage, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov/?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-007&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

Social Security is with you through life’s journey, on your first birthday and the many more that follow. Learn how we help you and your family secure today and tomorrow through our financial benefits, information, and planning tools at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/?utm_source=mip0218&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Reaching-Retirement-Age-Here's-What-You-Need-To-Know-008&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).