



PROTECTING YOUR MEDICARE DATA: SECURITY GUIDE

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Why This Matters Now

The CMS "Next-Generation Digital Health Ecosystem" and WISeR projects mean more of your Medicare data will move through private companies and AI platforms.

Data breaches are at an all-time high:

- In 2024, 81% of Americans were affected by a healthcare data breach.
- The Change Healthcare breach exposed 190 million records, disrupting pharmacies and delaying care.

Your Medicare records are highly valuable: Stolen medical data can be sold on the dark web for up to 10x more than a credit card number.



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How Your Data Can Be Breached

- Phishing emails: staff or contractors clicking a malicious link.
- Stolen credentials: passwords compromised through weak security.
- Third-party vendors: a breach at a partner company (like Change Healthcare or CMS's contractors).
- Human error: employee mistakes account for 61% of breaches.
- AI and new technologies: New tools add more entry points for hackers.



Laws like HIPAA and HITECH require companies to report breaches, but they can't prevent them—and notification can take months.

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How to Check if Your Information Was Breached

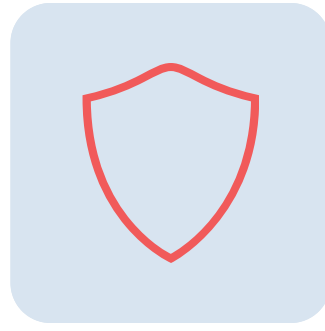
- Check the HHS "Breach Portal" (aka "Wall of Shame") at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov>.
- Use services like [HaveIBeenPwned.com](https://www.haveibeenpwned.com) to check your email.
- If you've received a breach notice letter from a healthcare provider, act immediately.



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Steps to Protect Yourself

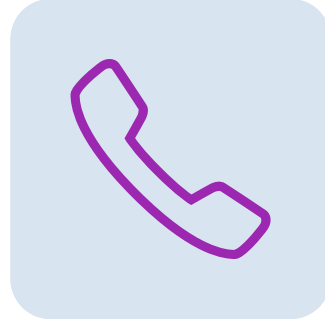
- Use a credit freeze: Stop criminals from opening accounts in your name.
- Set up Medicare's fraud alerts:
 - Check [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) at least monthly.
 - Sign up for paperless Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) for quicker review.
- Use strong passwords & 2-factor authentication for Medicare.gov and any healthcare portals.
- Watch for suspicious bills or calls: Hackers may use stolen records to bill fake services.
- Don't share your Medicare number: Treat it like your bank account number.



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What to Do If You're a Victim

- Call 1-800-MEDICARE to report fraud.
- Contact the FTC at [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.ftc.gov) to open a case.
- File a police report for identity theft.
- Notify your banks and credit bureaus (Equifax, TransUnion, Experian) to put a fraud alert on your accounts.



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Stay Informed

- Seniors are the #1 target for healthcare data fraud.
- Check your [MyMedicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) account and credit reports regularly to catch issues early.



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Resources

Senior Savings Network:

- Website: www.SeniorSavingsNetwork.org
- Phone: 1-800-729-9590

Additional Resources:

- Medicare: www.medicare.gov
- HHS Breach Portal: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov>
- FTC Identity Theft Help: www.identitytheft.gov

