

For Your Benefit

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Claiming Spousal Social Security Benefits

Understanding your options can help you maximize your benefits.

Although your own benefit is based on your lifelong earnings history, many don't realize the importance of how a spouse's benefit might affect them. Prudent planning can help you maximize your benefits as a couple and can make a meaningful difference in your financial plan.

It's not just your retirement age that determines when you should start drawing Social Security benefits. It turns out marital status can matter – a lot – when it comes to timing your benefits. If you have been married at least a year and are at least 62 years old, you have options to help maximize your household benefits. Generally, once the higher-earning spouse applies for benefits, the lower-earning spouse is entitled to half of their partner's Primary Insurance Amount – the benefit a person receives at full retirement age – also known as PIA.

If you are the lower-earning spouse and also qualify for individual benefits, you will receive your own worker benefit or your spousal benefit, whichever is the higher amount. If your benefits are lower than your spousal benefit, this means you will be paid your individual benefit first and then paid the difference between that and your spousal benefit. It is important to keep in mind that spousal benefits are at their maximum when you reach your full retirement age (FRA), so there isn't really an advantage to deferring them.

Content provided by Raymond James

MORE ON SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Special provisions for married couples are available that can substantially increase your household's Social Security benefit and impact your overall financial plan for retirement. For example, the lower earner can claim a spousal benefit at 62 and then switch to their own retirement worker benefit later, allowing the higher earner to build up delayed retirement credits for a higher worker benefit later. Of course, timing and needs are personal decisions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. It's a good idea to confer with your financial advisor to fully understand the advantages of these provisions and, if applicable, include them in your retirement income plan. After all, Social Security is critical to any retirement income plan, and no one wants to leave money on the table.



PROVISION	DEFINITION	BENEFIT	WHO WOULD BENEFIT	CONSIDERATIONS
Claim and Suspend	Allows individuals to claim benefits for one spouse, while the higher earner suspends their benefits and continues to work.	Allows spouse to begin claiming spousal benefit as early as age 62. When benefits are reinstated, the worker will receive a higher benefit amount.	Couples with a large discrepancy between earnings and one-earner couples.	Is your income enough to sustain your current retirement expenses?
Claim now, Claim more later	Allows married individuals to claim half their spouse's benefit, delay taking their own benefit so it earns retirement credits and then claim a higher personal benefit later.	Enables married individuals to collect a higher lifetime household benefit.	Couples with higher and more equal earning records OR Couples with one spouse who is several years older than the other.	Both spouses must be eligible for benefits (age 62 or older).

10 Home Remedies You Can Find In Your Kitchen

Nothing replaces a visit with a health care professional when you have a medical problem, but there are some issues that can be tamed with a simple visit to your pantry or fridge. Here's how you can squelch some troublesome topics without going any further than your own kitchen.

10 Foods With Additional Health Benefits

Vinegar. In some cases, vinegar could prevent a simple burn from blistering; however, if your burn is deep or severe, be sure to seek attention from your physician.

Tea bags. The tannins and caffeine in tea could help to reduce the ache of swelling and inflammation. If you wake up with puffy eyes, steep some tea, allow the bags to cool and apply to shut eyes. A tea bag also helps blood clot, which could come in handy after getting a tooth extracted. In summer, steep some black tea bags to ease a sunburn.

Olive oil. Soothe chapped or chafed skin with the silky rich feel of olive oil. Add moisture to dry hair by applying some oil to the ends before bed. You can also smooth out those sand-paper-feeling heels by rubbing your feet with oil and slipping them into a pair of cotton socks before turning in.

Avocado. Vitamins C and E, plus carotenoids (a type of antioxidant), in this green fruit calm redness and inflammation while moisturizing your skin to relieve dryness and itchiness. If your face is in need of some TLC, try mashing half of an avocado and apply as a face mask for 30 minutes. Just remember to buy extra avocados as a snack so you're not tempted to scrape your mask off with chips!

Ginger, anise, or peppermint tea. High-fiber, cruciferous veggies like cauliflower, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts may be kind to most of your body but may create painful rumbling in your gastrointestinal tract. To combat these unwelcome side effects, sip ginger or peppermint tea or make your own tea from anise seeds to help cut gas.

Papaya. If tea doesn't help your upset stomach, try eating papaya for dessert. The enzyme, papain, has been shown to beat bloat, gas, and gastrointestinal unrest by helping aid digestion and preventing constipation.

Lavender. Lavender's light purple shade has been shown to ease anxiety, while its scent eases muscle aches and tension by reducing spasms. A squeeze of a lavender hand lotion before bed can help lull you to sleep.

Tart cherries. The anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties of tart cherries could work wonders to help squelch the pain of gout. Studies show that it may pay to pucker up with tart cherries to relieve aches and pains resulting from an intense workout or a pulled muscle.

Oats. This fiber-filled breakfast favorite not only promotes heart health, but also soothes, cleanses, and exfoliates skin and clears acne. Prepare plain oats with hot water, let cool to apply it to your skin, and leave it on the affected area for a few minutes, or soak in an oatmeal bath to help lock in moisture and soothe irritated skin. Great news for summer skin maladies — sunburns, mosquito bites, eczema, and poison ivy: Oats are beneficial inside and out!

Garlic. As a natural anti-microbial, this pungent bulb can help you avoid getting the common cold — or at least ease its symptoms. The key component is allicin, which kills off bacteria and viruses. If you feel sniffles coming on and you can tolerate it, try eating raw garlic, which has been shown to be a potent infection-fighter!

Let your pantry items do double duty by helping cure minor irritations, bites, and swelling. These common household items may be able to mend common ailments — but remember, they're not meant to replace a physician's opinion or treatment.



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