

# Open Enrollment Timeline

Although employees enroll in benefits within a span of days, planning for your annual open enrollment period begins weeks (months, really!) in advance.

## 12 weeks

prior to Open Enrollment

- Develop a **communications plan** with key messages and communications tactics.

!! **Get tips on planning your work and working your plan!**

- Consider ways to **leverage data** and how to **use design** to make information more consumable.
- Consider an **interactive, online platform** to help employees understand and choose benefits.

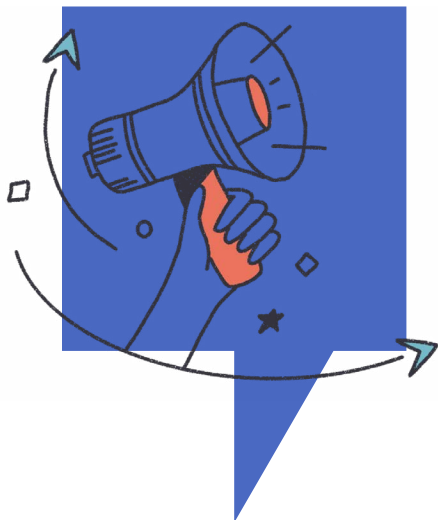
!! **See how a Virtual Benefits Assistant helped one Westcomm client provide handy tools to understand and evaluate their benefits.**



## 8-10 weeks

prior to Open Enrollment

- **Reach out to vendors** to gather information and updates.
- **Update your benefits guide** with new benefits, dates and things to know for open enrollment.
- **Send out Save the Date communications.** This may be an email, a postcard or a flyer, but we always recommend that at least one piece is sent to the homes since spouses/partners are typically part of the benefits selection process.



## 6-8 weeks

prior to Open Enrollment

- **Ramp up communications and education on some of your key benefits**—this really should be a year-round effort, but it's especially important as employees begin to think about their benefit choices for the year ahead.
- **Add new rates, plans, etc.,** to supporting materials.
- **Update your HR portal** so it is the go-to resource for employees during open enrollment.



## 3-4 weeks

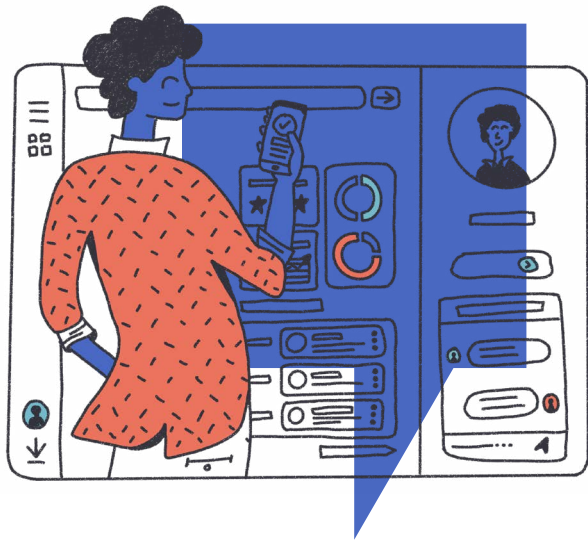
prior to Open Enrollment

- **Send out the benefits guide**, employee newsletter, FAQs and any other materials that are part of your open enrollment communications.
- **Highlight new benefits and changes**—be direct and clear so employees understand the changes and how it impacts them.
- **Send out talking points and FAQs to managers**—they are often the first stop for employees when questions arise.



## During Open Enrollment

- **Educate employees** about their benefits, available tools and enrollment deadlines.
- **Remind employees about OE deadlines**—make sure employees understand that if they don't enroll, they can't elect benefits again until the next year or have a qualifying life event.
- **Monitor online questions** and adjust communications as necessary.
- Send **targeted or personalized communications** to employees who have not made elections by a certain point.



## After

Open Enrollment

- **Celebrate** that you made it through—a lot of work went into open enrollment!
- **Communicate** when employees can expect to receive any new ID cards.
- **Debrief about open enrollment**—goals, results, highlights, lessons learned, etc. All of this will help lay the groundwork for the following year.
- **Consider a short employee survey** to gauge the successes and gaps in communication.
- At the beginning of the year, **communicate benefit reminders** like preventive care, ID cards, EAP, etc.

