

# Application Programming Interface

Application Programming Interface (API) is becoming the newest digital method in health care to distribute information from payers to health care professionals and external organizations in a timely and effective manner. It's not a UnitedHealthcare-only term or software. **API** is a common programming interface that interacts between multiple applications.

## Static versus real-time data

The data is in real time and can be programmed to be pulled repetitively and transferred to your practice management system or any format you prefer. API eliminates time keying information from one source to another and fills in the gaps for information you may not be getting with your current data streams.

## API connectivity options

There are 2 options for getting API data:

### API

Allows you to connect to us directly through a secure connection for all available API transaction types. An API Trading Partner agreement may be required, prepared by our legal team and sent to your authorized agent.

### API Extended X12

This option is available for claim status and eligibility and benefits information. API data is returned as an extension to your existing compliant electronic data interchange (EDI) transaction responses. For example, you would request the "extended" data in your 276 claim status inquiry, and it would be returned in the 277 response.

The extended data provides information that's not included in the standard EDI response, which eliminates billing staff having to look it up in our online portal, or calling and waiting.

Extended X12 API is offered multiple ways:

1. Establishing a direct connection with UnitedHealthcare for applicable real-time transactions
2. Connecting through Optum, our managed gateway for EDI transactions
3. Your existing clearinghouse if they have established connectivity to our APIs



## Benefits of using API

- Automates transactions on a timetable you set
- Has the ability to transfer the data to your practice management system, proprietary software or any application you prefer (interoperability)
- Saves time by distributing data faster
- Reduces the need to call
- Reduces paper
- Maintains workflow
- Compatible with new technology and supports standard formats



**There's no cost to get started. Our APIs will provide free, secure and efficient ways to seamlessly exchange data.**

# Digital solutions

## API, EDI and the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal

The information you receive with API mirrors the same type of detailed data you find on the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal, without signing in. We recommend reviewing the implementation guides available at [UHCprovider.com/apiguides](https://uhcprovider.com/apiguides) to determine the level of data provided and parameters to access.

Application Programming Interface (API)	Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)	UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal
<p><b>API</b> is a common interface used to instantly pull information and automate data feeds. API can replace existing digital solutions or enhance them, based on your needs and resources.</p>	<p><b>EDI</b> is an industry standard for data exchange in a HIPAA standard format through a clearinghouse.</p>	<p>The <b>portal</b> requires a physician, administrator or health care professional to sign in with a username and password (One Healthcare ID) to obtain information.</p>

Not sure which option is best for you? Check out our [Digital solutions comparison guide](#) to understand key differences and other available options for your practice.

### Setup and post-production support for API

We have a business and technical team ready to support you through each step of the implementation process including post-production. We'll schedule recurring onboarding calls to keep us on track and on schedule from testing to production.

API requires technical programming between your organization and ours to access real-time data in an automated fashion. The implementation will require coordination with either your IT department, software vendor or clearinghouse to set up the API service.

### A sandbox for the implementation of API services

UnitedHealthcare uses a stage (test) environment with live data for standing up the API service. Our API Marketplace includes a sandbox that returns sample responses for each API. A secure set of credentials will be provided to you for access to the stage and production environments.



## Getting started

1. Email us at [APIconsultant@uhc.com](mailto:APIconsultant@uhc.com) and request a consultation
2. API requires technical coordination with a health care professional or an organization's IT department, vendor or clearinghouse
3. During the initial consultation, we review compatibility, API connectivity options and transaction types



## Resources

- Visit the API Marketplace to explore all API digital solutions
- Visit [UHCprovider.com/api](https://uhcprovider.com/api) to learn more about **API types and transactions, connectivity** and getting started options
- Check out our [Digital solutions comparison guide: API, EDI and the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal](#)