

March 07, 2026

Ask the 'Stache



In partnership with

Allara

Every Saturday, we open the mailbag, pour some strong coffee, and tackle the tax questions keeping America awake at 2 a.m. Here's this week's question:



I'm not ready to file by April 15th. What does an extension actually do, and what doesn't it do?

Ah, the extension. The great American tax security blanket. Every spring, millions of people request one with the confident relief of someone who

just found an extra hour in the day. And every fall, a meaningful portion of those same people discover they've been holding the blanket upside down.

A tax extension gives you more time to file. It does not give you more time to pay.

Your paperwork deadline moves from April 15 to October 15. Your payment deadline stays exactly where it was, tapping its foot, checking its watch.

So what does an extension actually buy you?

Breathing room to get your documents in order, especially useful if you're waiting on a late K-1, sorting out a complicated situation, or you've simply lost the will to live every time you open your tax software. No judgment. We've been there.

Filing an extension also protects you from the failure-to-file penalty, which runs 5 percent of your unpaid balance per month, up to 25 percent. That's the expensive one. Avoiding it is genuinely worthwhile.

And what doesn't it do?

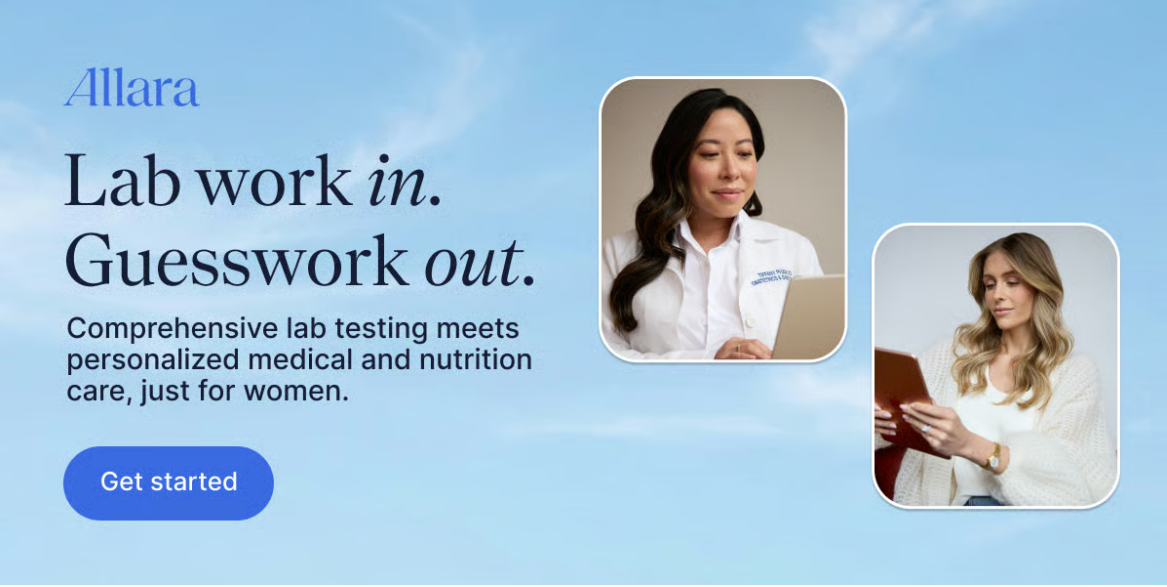
It doesn't pause interest. It doesn't pause the failure-to-pay penalty, which is 0.5 percent per month on whatever you still owe. And it definitely doesn't make the IRS forget you exist — a fantasy we understand but cannot endorse.

If you think you'll owe, the move is to estimate your tax bill and send in a payment by April 15, even if it's a rough guess. Overpaying slightly means a refund later. Underpaying means penalties and interest on the gap, but a smaller gap is always better than ignoring it entirely.

The short version: File the extension if you need it — it's free, it takes about two minutes, and it saves you from the worst penalty on the menu. Just don't mistake the paperwork reprieve for a payment holiday. The IRS is many things, but flexible about its calendar it is not.

PRESENTED BY ALLARA

Feeling off lately? It could be your hormones.

The advertisement banner for Allara features a light blue background with a subtle cloud pattern. On the left, the Allara logo is in a blue serif font. Below it, the headline "Lab work in. Guesswork out." is written in a large, elegant serif font. Underneath the headline, a sub-headline in a smaller sans-serif font reads: "Comprehensive lab testing meets personalized medical and nutrition care, just for women." A blue rounded rectangular button with the text "Get started" in white is positioned below the sub-headline. To the right of the text, there are two circular inset images. The top image shows a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white lab coat, looking down at a laptop. The bottom image shows a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a white sweater, looking at a tablet.

Allara

Lab work *in*.
Guesswork *out*.

Comprehensive lab testing meets
personalized medical and nutrition
care, just for women.

Get started

3pm crashes every day. Unexpected weight gain. Unpredictable cycles. When symptoms start piling up, your hormones and metabolic health are often part of the story.

Allara helps women understand what's really going on with comprehensive hormone and metabolic testing. Their advanced testing goes beyond the basics to measure key markers like insulin, thyroid function, reproductive hormones, and metabolic health. Whether you already have a diagnosis or are still searching for answers, Allara's care team uses your results to create a personalized treatment plan with expert medical and nutrition guidance.

They treat a wide range of women's health conditions, including PCOS, fertility challenges, weight management, perimenopause, thyroid conditions, and more.

With Allara, you get clarity, expert support, and a personalized care plan all for as little as \$0 with insurance. This isn't about quick fixes. It's about understanding your body and addressing the root causes.

[Get started with Allara](#)

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