

## Do diabetics need a health insurance?

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Changing lifestyles are taking a toll on the health of Indians and preventable disorders are witnessing an increase like never before. Of these, diabetes is a debilitating disorder that over time, can impact an individual's life physically, mentally, emotionally and financially.

World Health Organization states that 72 million people in India are suffering from diabetes and the number is not stopping. Diabetes, often termed as the 'silent killer', can lead to several associated complications, increases the probability of hospitalization.

Lifestyle modification is one aspect of managing diabetes although a person needs other things such as test strips, meters, insulin/insulin pump and medication as well to keep blood sugar levels under control. For those who do not take requisite precautions or in people where the condition spirals out of control, the probability of paying large hospital bills also increases. This necessitates the need for a dedicated and exclusive diabetes insurance plan. Absence of a plan makes most of the expenses coming out of one's own pocket. Statistics indicate that the urban poor spend about 34% and those in rural areas spend about 27% of their income on treatment and management of diabetes.

### Why an insurance?

Diabetes leads to several complications which include heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, vision loss and neuropathy. A diabetes specific insurance plan not only adds necessary hospitalization concerns arising out of the above health issues but also enables timely access to supplies, medication and other necessities. With recent reforms and improved access to healthcare and coverage, it is easier to obtain a specific health insurance.

Diabetes specific insurance plan can accrue some advantages.

- Most of the plans cover the hospitalization costs in case of complications. One can buy either an individual plan or a

floaters plan. Variants is available where the person does not need to undergo any medical examination unlike in normal insurance plans. Some insurers even offer policies minus the traditional waiting period. Gestational diabetes is covered under the maternity benefit.

- Insurance plans also cover outpatient expenses such as diagnostic tests, medical consultations, cost of drugs and homecare. Some do offer compensation in case of untimely death.
- Proper insurance plan ensures the donor expenses in case of a kidney transplant. Dialysis expenses and cost for artificial limbs are covered up to a certain limit in some policies.
- Diabetes insurance plan also offers tax benefits to the policyholder under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act.

The only flip side perhaps is that the premium for a person with diabetes is generally higher due to frequent claims and needed medical attention.

If you and your family member are diagnosed with diabetes don't wait to worsen the condition get a plan after all health insurance worlds is not hard to navigate. It is imperative to understand the various clauses and choose a well suited plan. Clear your doubts before signing in.

**Sujata Sharma, Diabetes Educator, BeatO**