

[Travelling abroad? You can pause your current health insurance policy to save on premium](#)



It's a one-off feature offered by one insurer only, but its uniqueness makes it a tempting scheme for frequent travellers.

Health insurance policy's pause feature enables policy holders to halt their coverage when they are travelling abroad.

Just as in an investment, insurance policies are prone to overlap too, and investors — at times — hold two or more policies similar in nature in their portfolio. For instance, there could be one health insurance cover in the individual's name, and another one bought jointly with family members. Also, there could be another one bought by policyholder's employer in their name.

One might argue that there is nothing wrong in holding more than one policy, and some tend to believe: the more, the merrier!

However, what would be the consequence when a policyholder is allowed to pause or switch off a policy because the other policy kicks in? This could happen in case of an overseas travel. When someone is set to travel, prior to that, buying a policy is more of a compulsion, instead of a choice, thanks to the visa rules.

So, why not put the main health insurance policy on hold for the time being until you are covered by the new policy overseas?

This is exactly what an insurer offers.

ManipalCigna Health Insurance offers a product called ProHealth Prime under Advantage and Protect variants wherein it offers a 'switch off' feature that can halt your coverage when you are travelling outside India.

"This coverage is thoughtfully designed in such a way that the personal accident, critical illnesses and worldwide coverages as applicable, are not switched off during their travel abroad as such exigencies can happen anywhere in the world," says Ashish Yadav, Head of Products, ManipalCigna Health Insurance.

It is vital for policyholders to know that they must inform their insurer about the departure and arrival at least 48 or 72 hours prior to the date.

One would wonder as to what exactly is the advantage of switching off feature in an insurance policy. Policyholders stand to get a discount on premium at the time of renewing the policy.

"The pro-rated premiums for the switch off period are offered as a discount during the subsequent renewal thereby ensuring the policy holders pay as they use the cover," adds Mr Yadav.

As a matter of fact, switching off feature was rolled out a little less than one year ago. So it is not an old feature and is offered by only one insurer so far. Also, this is yet to pick up among policyholders.

"I am unaware of any other company offering this, and so far, have not come across any client enquiring about the same," says Abhishek Misra, Chief Executive Officer and Principal Officer, Bonanza Insurance.

Coverage around the globe

It is vital to note that this is a one-off policy and is, therefore, not offered by a slew of insurers.

When MintGenie asked Bajaj Allianz General Insurance about any similar offering, the spokesperson stated that instead of offering a break or switching off, the company offers a Global Healthcare plan that enables policyholder to avail of treatment anywhere around the world. In that plan, insurer provides a separate sum insured for domestic and international coverage.

Therefore, it makes the 'switching off' completely irrelevant.

"There would be no requirement for switching off or taking a break during the policy period while the insured is traveling abroad; in fact, in such health insurance plans, the insured gets covered in his home country as well as while he is traveling abroad. A global healthcare plan will provide financial protection against unforeseen medical emergencies, hospitalization costs, and accidents," says Bhaskar Nerurkar, Head, Health Administration Team, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.