

# Covid-specific health cover in high demand as cases surge

**VIJAY C ROY**

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Abysmally low health insurance penetration notwithstanding, the fear of contracting Covid-19 has seen a spurt in the demand for short-term Covid-specific covers, especially among first-time buyers.

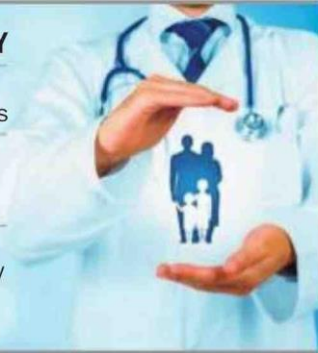
According to insurers, even those who are already covered under regular health insurance are buying standard Covid-19 plans for a guaranteed coverage.

Currently, more than a dozen insurance companies are offering Covid plans.

‘Corona Kavach’ has seen a positive uptake from customers, especially those up to 45 years. We are witnessing maximum queries for a cover of Rs 2-5 lakh, considering Covid treatment cost. The higher demand is for 6.5 and

## ₹565-CR CLAIMS IN JULY

- Higher demand is for policies ranging from 6.5 to 9.5 months
- In July, ₹565-cr claims against 35,000 hospitalisations were settled
- People are preferring ₹2-5 lakh cover—average monthly premium is ₹500



9.5-month policies,” says Gurdeep Singh Batra, head of retail underwriting, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.

Covid-specific products have been designed keeping in mind those who cannot afford to pay Rs 800 to Rs 1,000 a month for health insurance. The average cost of the policy is as low as Rs 500.

While ‘Corona Kavach’ is an indemnity-based health plan and the most sought after,

‘Corona Rakshak’ is a fixed-benefit policy. Both these policies are much in demand across the country, particularly in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi NCR where Covid incidence is high.

“The response has been tremendous. We have been selling an average 1,000 ‘Corona kavach’ policies a day,” says Amit Chhabra, head of health insurance, Policybazaar.com.

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

## Covid-specific covers...

FROM PAGE 1

With cases mounting by the day, there has been a steady rise in insurance claims too. “In July, claims worth Rs 565 crore were settled against 35,000 hospitalisations. An average Rs 1.6 lakh was given to each claimant,” says Indraneel Chatterjee, co-founder and principal officer, Renewbuy.com.

Bhaskar Nerurkar, head of health claims at Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, says for a cashless Covid-19 claim, they do pre-authorisation approval within 45 minutes while final settlement is done in less than two hours after bill verification. “In case of a reimbursement claim, we pay a policyholder within three working days,” he adds.