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[Who Should Buy The New Corona Kavach Insurance](#)

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As Covid-19 cases mount unabated in India, financial advisers say you need a health insurance plan for your family more than ever. But should you consider the new coronavirus cover? The regulator mandated insurers to launch this policy—called Corona Kavach (Hindi for armour against coronavirus)—to cover the cost of Covid-19 treatment. It's an indemnity policy that requires one-time payment for a coverage of up 9.5 months.

“The Corona Kavach can't replace the normal mediclaim policy,” said Harshvardhan Roongta, certified financial planner and co-founder of Roongta Securities. “But if someone is not currently covered by health insurance, or if they are not adequately covered, it would make a lot of sense to consider buying this specific protection.”

India now has nearly 15 lakh confirmed cases of Covid-19, the third highest in the world after the U.S. and Brazil. The pace of infection has only increased. No medicine has been found yet to fully cure the virus and vaccines are under trial. In extreme cases, infected people require hospitalisation and ventilator support. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India allowed the Corona Kavach policy to cover those who don't have any kind of health protection.

“All standard indemnity policies are covering coronavirus in India,” said Gurdeep Singh Batra, head—retail underwriting, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance. “The only issue is, what about the population who have not taken any insurance cover. So, as an inclusion journey for the general population, the regulator mandated that a Corona product made immediately available.”

Corona Kavach Vs Standard Mediclaim

Most covid insurance plans offered by insurers will have near identical benefits because these were mandated by the insurance regulator.

- If you do not have a health insurance policy, the waiting period in a standard policy is 30 days. This means that if you buy a policy tomorrow, and you contract the Covid-19 within the next month, the policy will not cover the costs for treatment.
- The Corona Kavach, on the other hand, has a waiting period of 15 days. It also covers pre-hospitalisation treatment for 15 days and post-hospitalisation treatment costs for 30 days.
- All Corona Kavach policies cover cost of treatment at home for up to 14 days per incident, which in the normal course would require care and treatment at a hospital but is provided at home.
- The Corona Kavach covers the cost of personal protective equipment or PPEs and other consumables, which standard policies don't cover.

- These insurance policies also cover comorbidity.
- “If you’re a diabetes patient and you have tested positive for the coronavirus. The positive result is the trigger for the Corona Kavach policy to be activated,” Batra said. “But, during the hospitalisation if your diabetes starts acting up, and needs to be treated, that will also be covered by the Corona Kavach to the extent of your sum insured.”

Policies Available

The policies offered by insurance companies are similar given that most of the benefits are mandated by the regulator. These offer a minimum cover of Rs 50,000 and in multiples of that amount till Rs 5 lakh. It covers individuals for 3.5 months, 6.5 months, and 9.5 months.

Premium changes with insurer.

BASE COVER 9.5 MONTH CORONA KAVACH

INSURER	Premium on Lakh Policy 5		Pre-policy Check up	Comor-bidity	Pre/Post Hospitalis-ation (days)	Waiting Period (days)	Home Care (Days)	Under-writing Loading **
	40-Year-Old	56-Year-Old						
Star Health	1901	2281	No	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
New India	1284	6422	No	Yes	15/30	15	*14	Yes
National	4095	6510	No	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
HDFC ERGO	1064	3459	-	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
Religare	-	-	No	Yes	15/30	15	14	Yes
United India	2029	6490	-	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
Max Bupa	-	-	-	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
Bajaj Allianz	2770	5630	No	Yes	15/30	15	14	-
ICICI Lombard	2542	9533	-	Yes	15/30	15	14	***
Aditya Birla	1967	5460	-	Yes	15/30	15	14	Yes

* New India has capped home care treatment expenses at Rs 15,000

** Charge added to premium based on pre-existing conditions

*** Proposal may be rejected based on underwriting decision

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Most insurance providers have provided a rate card for the Corona Kavach . While some offer a flat charge, others increase the premium in case of pre-existing conditions.

“For the Corona Kavach we have very flat loading,” said Shreeraj Deshpande, chief operating officer, Future Generali India Insurance. “If a person has hypertension, or in case of diabetes, or asthma, there is loading because you can’t do an underwriting for a small ticket-size product.”

The policies are available for individuals and as a family floater.

Some insurers offer a discount on the premium charged if more than one member of a family are covered. For example, Star Health and Allied Insurance reduces the premium for the

second member by 20% and offers a discount of 30% for the third members, and 40% to every member added after that.

This discount works if other members are younger than the first one. Also, the discount with insurer.

It might be a better idea to get individual covers for each member of the family, according to Harshvardhan Roongta, a financial planner. "In most cases, in health insurance we prefer a family floater option because it is more efficient," said Roongta.

"The chances that all family members contract a disease or require hospitalisation at the same time are low," said Roongta. "With Covid-19 though, this isn't the case. It is highly infectious, and usually if one person in the family gets it, the chance of others also contracting it is very high."

What To Keep In Mind

You can't yet buy Corona Kavach directly from the website of an insurance company. Some insurance aggregators have started offering the product, while insurance companies are offering a call-in facility to buy the policy.

Also, with Covid-19 cases rising, especially in metropolitan and tier 1 cities, the number of hospital beds available is limited. As a result, even if you have a health policy, or buy a Corona Kavach, you may not get admitted to a hospital covered by your policy. That will prevent cashless hospitalisation. In that case, patients may have to file for reimbursement after being discharged.

Hospitals are trying to work around it.

"Wherever we have an agreement with the hospital, we are able to give cashless," said Deshpande. "Many a times, what happens is that if our customer goes to a hospital and if it is not in our network, but if the hospital is ready to provide cashless facility based on our guarantee, then we are happy to do that. There are many cases where hospitals have agreed to it."