

Super top-up health plans: An affordable aid

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Just as Nishit was busy planning for his annual holiday to the European stretch with family, his father suffered a major cardiac arrest. Following the attack, Nishit's father had to undergo a major bypass surgery. Since, he was admitted at a leading private hospital in the town, the expenses incurred towards this exigency were a veritably huge sum. As days passed, his father was discharged from the hospital and started recovering gradually. However, because of this unanticipated situation, Nishit not only had to cancel his vacation given all his savings had whisked away, but also had to reconsider his financial planning, since his accounts now would take time to recover from the monetary jolt.

As healthcare costs are on a constant rise, planning financial resources towards unanticipated medical costs is absolutely imperative. While, sustaining a few medical expenses from one's own pocket may not hit the bank balance hard, it is notable that a single critical medical condition as mentioned above is well capable of hitting your finances.

With increasing awareness and well contemplated employee benefits, though many are covered under basic retail and group mediclaim health insurances, it is ideal to have double protection to face such exigencies. Soon with the National Health Protection Scheme recently introduced by the Government, it would act as an additional cover over and above the cover provided by the government. Typically, the opted sum insured range for basic mediclaim policies varies between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 5 lakh. Bearing medical expenses beyond this sum can take a toll on an individual's hard-earned savings.

Super top-up health insurance plans are an added protection in such scenarios, when the maximum payout from a basic health policy gets exhausted. Under



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these plans, a customer can choose a specific limit/deductible amount that a policy holder will have to bear, before the insurance policy starts paying out at the time of claim. This limit is termed as aggregate deductible in insurance parlance and a customer can opt for the figure depending on the maximum coverage of his or her basic medical policy or the expense one may extract from one's own income.

In a top-up plan, your insurer considers the sum total of all the eligible medical expenses in a given policy period and if this amount crosses the chosen deductible in the policy, you become eligible for a claim payout. Thus, super top-up plans are a comprehensive and economical shield against the unforeseen medical costs that may be incurred beyond the cap of a basic health policy.

For example, in Nishit's case, if he had a floater health insurance policy covering his father, with a coverage of Rs 3 lakhs, he should have opted for a super top-up plan, preferably with a Rs 10 lakh coverage and a deductible of Rs 3 lakhs. Hence, any expenses that were incurred over Rs 3 lakh, during the policy term, which otherwise he would have to bear out of his pocket, would now be covered by the super top-up health insurance. This would have been a sigh of relief for him as earlier during the year, he had suffered a dengue attack and Rs 50,000 off the Rs 3 lakh mediclaim policy had already been consumed. His father's ailment cost him an expense of Rs 5 lakh, half of which he had to bear himself since the policy limits got exhausted. Had he taken a super

top-up, this extra cost would have been easily tackled, in fact, at a much lesser premium amount!

In order to offer maximum coverage, super top-up policies can be availed either as an individual or as a floater policy. With this type of policy, one can cover self, spouse, dependent children and dependent parents under the same policy and total number of family members covered in one policy can go up to six members. The entry age criteria for dependent children and dependent parents may vary from insurer to insurer. There are a number of benefits that a super top-up plan offers besides the regular inpatient, pre and post hospitalization expense covers such as aggregate deductibles, road and optional air ambulance covers, cover for organ donor expenses and free medical check-ups. There are plans available in the market with sum insured ranging from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 50 lakh with the aggregate deductibles options from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Waiting period for pre-existing diseases remains to be there in the super top-up plans, however, few insurers have now started introducing a much shorter waiting period such as 12 months for pre-existing diseases.

Opting for affordable super top-up plans can be a good way of keeping your finances in good health, as they come at less premium and shield you during the critical medical needs and emergencies. Waiting for a bad experience to teach you may not be wise when a stitch in time can save you nine.

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