

How To Choose The Health Insurance Plan That's Right For You

You just turned 26 and you can no longer be on your parents **health insurance plan**. You now have to figure it out all for yourself. Or, you are 45 and finally got a good paying job that will allow you to afford a health insurance plan for you and your family. However, you have no idea how to go about getting on a plan. You've heard multiple things from multiple sources, and it has left you feeling confused about what to look for, how much you should be paying and what the different types of health insurance plans are.

That is why we have put together this article — to help start you on your path to finding the right plan for you.

There are however some things you need to know before you actually begin your research.

First, when looking into health insurance, it is important whatever plan you choose meets the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (i.e. a national piece of legislation that attempts to ensure every American has quality healthcare). This is essential because, if it doesn't, you will still be required to pay the yearly fine those without healthcare are subject to.

Second, you need to make sure you enroll during the **open enrollment** period, (i.e. between November 1st through January 31st). This is because this is the period of time set aside each year when health insurance agencies are required by law to accept new clients, regardless of medical history. If you fail to enroll during this time period, you risk not being able to obtain health insurance for an entire year.

Third, use multiple market places. It is a mistake to only use one because you could be missing out on a great deal. Additionally, do not feel obligated to only search government sites. While you can find a great plan there, you can also find great deals on sites like eHealth.com or healthinsurance.com.

Okay, now that you know what to be aware of before you start looking, it is time to get into what you need to know while you are actually on the hunt.

It is so important you realize what type of health insurance plan you are actually looking at before signing on. This way you know what to expect and you can be sure you will receive the coverage you need.

For example, there are **PPO vs HMO** plans. HMOs are plans that will allow you to go to any doctor in your network (i.e. pre-approved list of doctors) and still receive financial help via your plan. The advantage to these plans are they are generally cheaper than PPOs (i.e. plans which allow you to go to doctors in your network as well as doctors outside of it). However, HMOs mean a much more limited range of care than PPOs because you can only go to listed doctors if you wish to use your insurance.

Then there are health insurance plans which offer higher **deductibles** (i.e. what you pay before you are able to make a claim), which can be a pain at first because your upfront costs are higher. However, if you don't end up using your insurance very often you can end up saving money because higher deductibles usually mean smaller premiums.

There are also insurance plans which offer **coinsurance**, (i.e. you still have to pay a deductible, however, after that is paid, you then pay a certain percentage of whatever claims are left over as well). Again, the benefits to this tend to be lower monthly premiums, though it can end up being costly if you think you will use your insurance on a more regular basis. Note however, if you do opt for a plan that requires coinsurance, many have an **out-of-pocket-maximum** (i.e. a max amount you will pay — including your deductible — before the insurance company takes over payments altogether).

Finally, you need to take into consideration your plan's policy on **co-payments**, (i.e. preset payment amounts which are charged to you every time you visit the doctor). This is because if, for example, you don't plan to visit the doctor often, you can opt for a higher co-payment plan, in exchange for a lower premium. However, if you anticipate visiting the doctors often, you might want to opt for a higher premium in exchange for significantly lower co-payments.

All this having been said, choosing a health insurance plan can still be a daunting task. However, if you do your research and persist you will find a plan that will work for you.