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## HOW CAN EXPATS CHOOSE THE BEST HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN (AND SAVE ON INSURANCE PREMIUMS)?

In this guide, we cover most popular questions about international health insurance for expats, including how you can save money on your insurance premium.

### Firstly, do you need international health insurance?

If you want access to private healthcare, there are three types of insurance policy you can consider:

- **Travel insurance** sometimes includes cover for accident and emergency treatment, but usually it covers you only for temporary trips abroad.
- Expats who live permanently in another country sometimes purchase **local health insurance**, but those expats might find themselves restricted to treatment in low-quality hospitals and they won't necessarily have medical cover for trips abroad.
- **International health insurance** is a good solution for expats who want access to the best hospitals and doctors where they live, and who want full cover when they travel or make trips home

If you relocate to another country with your family for work, you might find that access to high-quality hospitals and English-speaking doctors is priceless. Also, depending on your destination public healthcare system might not be the same as at your home country.

### Which international health plan is right for you?

When you started thinking about your health and well-being while living abroad, you were probably considering private health insurance in general terms.

But while health insurance certainly gives you access to private healthcare, the *health plan* you purchase defines the rules and limitations of that access. So, it's super important to pick the right plan!

Many standard health plans include cover for hospital treatment, cancer treatment, visits to the doctor, and emergency medical evacuation. Beyond these standard benefits, health plans can be differentiated by their additional benefits (e.g., mental health treatment, maternity care) and their levels of cover (i.e., how much the plan benefits cover you for).

### Will your health plan cover your partner and children?

When you apply for your health plan, you should be able to include your spouse or partner and any number of children and stepchildren for an additional premium.

With most Insurers, you can include your unmarried children up to the age of 18 (or 25, if they're in full-time education such as university studies).

### Can you personalise your health plan?

Personalisation is extremely topical in healthcare. So, pick a provider that will offer personalisation.

### How are international health insurance premiums calculated?

Most Insurers will take into account two groups of factors when calculating your premium. The first group of factors concerns:

1. Circumstances such as your age, where you live, how much cover you want, your medical history, and whether you want to include your family on your plan
2. Macroeconomic factors affecting the cost of private healthcare around the world, such as medical inflation, disasters and pandemics like COVID-19, and pioneering medical technologies

### How can you save money on your premium?

Here's a snapshot of how you can reduce the amount you're spending on expat health insurance:

- **Shared hospital accommodation**—Choose semi-private accommodation during hospital stays reduces your premium up to X%. Semi-private accommodation means sharing an ensuite room with one other patient.
- **Higher excess**—Contributing more towards your medical bills can massively reduce your premium.
- **Area of cover**—If you live in a country where private healthcare is less expensive and you do not require cover in countries where private healthcare *is* expensive (e.g., Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada)
- **Pay monthly**—Paying your premium each month is a good way to spread the cost over the duration of your plan (though the overall amount you'll pay over the year is slightly higher).
- **Cheaper plan**—If you live in a country where primary healthcare is cheap or if you don't need regular visits to the doctor, you can save money by purchasing a plan that covers only the serious medical conditions such as hospitalisation and cancer care.

### How do you pick the right excess?

When you first start thinking about health insurance, you probably just want a policy to pay for your private healthcare. So, why bother with an excess? After all, an excess is what you pay towards your medical bills *before* the insurance company starts paying.

Counter-intuitively, *not having an excess* (known as 'nil excess') is unpopular. Why? Having a nil excess means more expensive premiums: sometimes, health plans with nil excess can be 20% more expensive than a plan with the smallest excess available.

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