

How to determine if supplemental health insurance is right for you

Supplemental health insurance helps pay for costs and services that your regular healthcare plan doesn't cover.

Healthcare costs can add up quickly and unpredictably due to an illness or injury. Regular health insurance policies do not necessarily cover all potential costs, including out-of-network charges, deductibles and copays, to name a few. In fact, a 2020 survey found that a third of respondents had received at least one unexpected medical bill in the previous two years.

Unanticipated medical costs can really stretch your monthly budget. Supplemental health insurance, also known as secondary health insurance, can help close those potential budget gaps.

What is supplemental health insurance?

Supplemental health insurance is an insurance policy that helps you pay unexpected medical bills that your regular health insurance plan doesn't cover. Here are some examples:

- Unexpected child care – pay for someone to take care of your children while you are ill or in the hospital
- Pet care – keep your pets active even if your injury or illness makes it impossible to take them for walks
- Meals – if you are unable to cook, you could use part of your benefit to have food delivered to your home
- Home maintenance – make sure the lawn gets mowed or the snow gets shoveled when you can't do it yourself
- Transportation – pay for gas or even airfare and parking if you need to travel to see a specialist or make regular trips to a clinic
- Deductibles and co-insurance amounts – help pay for deductibles not covered by your primary health insurance plan
- Private room and private duty nurse fees
- Outpatient surgery
- Emergency room visits

Things to consider with supplemental health insurance

As you think about getting additional health insurance, begin by reviewing your current policies, including policies that cover partners/spouses and children. The key is to make sure that you're complementing – not duplicating – your primary health insurance.