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## YOUR MONEY

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

# Get pre-existing ailments covered by paying an additional premium

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News reports suggest Indians will fly off to foreign destinations in even larger numbers this holiday season than last year. Before they do so, they must purchase a comprehensive travel insurance cover with an adequate sum insured.

#### What is covered?

Travel insurance provides coverage for medical and non-medical issues abroad. "On the medical side, these policies typically cover expenses arising due to hospitalisation, outpatient department (OPD) treatment, post-hospitalisation expenses, etc.," says Amrish Dubey, vice-president, travel insurance, TATA AIG General Insurance. According to Parthanil Ghosh, director and chief business officer, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, "Some insurers offer hospital cash allowance to take care of

non-medical expenses." Non-medical coverage includes trip cancellations, curtailments, flight delays, missed connections, and loss of checked-in baggage, passports, and other important documents.

#### Exclusions you should be aware of

Travel insurance policies come with several exclusions. "Pre-existing medical conditions are generally excluded unless

explicitly covered by the policy. Routine physical examinations or other medical evaluations are not included without apparent signs of health impairment," says Aashish Sethi, head-health SBU (strategic business unit) and travel, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.

He adds that losses or thefts not reported to the police within 24 hours may not be eligible for claims, and documents like passports or licences detained by authorities are also not covered. "Health conditions arising from substance use and accidents caused by driving under the influence are not covered," says Meet Kapadia, head-travel insurance, Policybazaar.com.

Dubey says each insurer has its own set of exclusions for every product, so it's advisable to review the terms and conditions in detail before choosing a policy.

#### What's the right sum insured?

The sum insured should depend on factors like destina-

tion, duration of stay, traveller's age, and planned activities.

"Evaluate the medical costs in the destination country and choose the cover accordingly," says Ghosh. Travellers to high-cost medical destinations like the USA and Canada should opt for higher cover. Those with pre-existing conditions, older individuals, and those travelling to multiple locations should also consider larger covers.

#### Will PEDs be covered?

Most insurers cover pre-existing diseases (PEDs) only under life-threatening conditions. "This is a default cover in all travel policies limited up to \$3,000. It covers treatment until the insured becomes medically stable," says Sethi.

Nowadays, add-on covers are available for emergency medical situations related to PEDs that offer coverage up to the specified policy limit.

#### Key points to consider

Travel insurance, with a minimum medical and evacuation coverage of 30,000 euros, is mandatory for getting a visa to Schengen countries. Check that your policy covers all intended destinations. "Not all travel insurance policies cover all destinations," says Ghosh.

Also, review the network of hospitals and the availability of cashless services in your travel destination. Compare policies for coverage and premium, and consider the insurer's claims payout ratio. Finally, make a proper declaration about any medical condition.

### COST OF TRAVEL INSURANCE FOR TRIP TO EUROPE

Insurer	Plan	Sum insured (\$)	Premium (₹)
Niva Bupa	Travel Assure Comprehensive	250,000	4,598
Tata AIG	Travel Guard Plus Gold		4,728
Reliance General	Value Care		6,853
ICICI Lombard	Platinum		9,333
Care Health	Explore Gold	200,000	5,448
HDFC ERGO	Retail-Platinum		5,848

Premiums are for three members of a family aged 40,38 and 10, travelling to Europe on a Schengen visa, for a 32-day trip  
Source: Policybazaar.com