



LIBERTY INSURANCE ASSOCIATES

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How to Shop for Health Insurance

If you're in the market for new medical coverage, either through a choice of new plans at work or as an individual, ask yourself these very important questions.

- What are my health care needs? The answer will depend on whether you have children, are frequently ill yourself, require many prescription drugs or have a preexisting condition. Make a list of the benefits you are most likely to need, then be sure the policy you are considering provides these coverages.
- Is preventive care important to me? If you want coverage for yearly health exams, mammograms, immunizations or well-baby care, you may want to consider an HMO or PPO or POS plan.
- Do I frequently need to see specialists? You may find access to specialists easier through traditional fee-for-service plans, particularly if you want to choose the specialist you see.
- Do I mind filling out claim forms? Many traditional plans involve some paperwork. If you don't want to fill out claim forms or think you will forget, you may be better off with a managed care plan.
- How much can I afford to spend? The amount of coverage you purchase may be limited by how much you can afford to spend.
- Is the policy guaranteed renewable? If it is, the insurance company cannot cancel your policy as long as you keep paying premiums.
- Can I get a "free look?" Many insurers provide a 30-day trial period during which you can get a refund if the new policy doesn't meet your needs.
- Will the insurance company be able to pay my claims? Be sure the insurer is financially stable. Independent groups such as Duff & Phelps, Moody's, Standard & Poor's, A.M. Best and Weiss publish the financial ratings of insurance companies.
- Does the insurance company have a good reputation for customer service, and does it pay claims promptly? Talk with several people who are already insured with that company, then check with your state insurance department.
- Have I read the policy? Study it carefully before you sign up. You need to know exactly what health benefits you will have before you need to use them.