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## INSURANCE QUERY.



**ANAND ROY**

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I'm 32 and purchasing my first health insurance policy. After losing a close family member to cancer, I saw first-hand how expensive treatment can be — chemotherapy, hospital stays, and post-care costs add up fast. That made me realise the importance of having strong coverage. I want a policy that offers long-term protection, but I'm unsure of the coverage I need. Should I start with a higher sum insured, or can I increase it over time? I've also heard about critical illness riders and cancer-specific plans — would adding a rider be enough, or should I consider a separate policy? With so many options, I want to make an informed decision. What key factors should I consider to ensure I have the right coverage



without hidden exclusions or limitations?

**Shivam**

It's commendable that you're prioritising your health at 32 by purchasing your first health insurance policy. Though you're primarily concerned about cancer, I would suggest you purchase a comprehensive health insurance plan that will also cover cancer treatments. In your case, considering your family

history of cancer, it may be wise to opt for a sum insured of ₹15-20 lakh. It will be beneficial if the product has an annual no-claim bonus feature.

This acts as a safeguard against high treatment costs, including chemotherapy, high-end treatments and extended hospital stays. Choose a policy that includes modern treatments, post-treatment care and consumable expenses cover.

Consider policies that include add-on

benefits, such as telemedicine consultations, wellness programmes, preventive health check-ups, home healthcare and provisions for a second medical opinion. These can help improve your overall care experience and support your health journey.

The insurer should also have a seamless claims process and a wide network of hospitals in your area, as this increases your options for cashless treatment without additional costs.

As you are young and healthy, you may also explore policies which offer 'freeze your age' as a feature.

This feature locks your health insurance premium at the age you purchase the policy, even though premiums typically increase as you get older. This means you could potentially save money on your premiums in the long term if you remain healthy.

The best time to buy health insurance is when you're young and healthy. This will help you secure a policy with lower premiums, and avoid waiting periods for pre-existing conditions.

The writer is MD & CEO, Star Health & Allied Insurance