

Would you feel better knowing you were on track for your retirement or ready for any emergency? And would it comfort you to know that, if you died unexpectedly, your family would be well cared for? One of the most important things you can do now to protect your family is to make sure you have adequate insurance for their needs.

LIFE INSURANCE

If you are married, have children, own a home or are responsible for other family members, then you should probably have life insurance. While there are many factors to consider when determining how much protection you should have (debts, education goals for your children and other income needs), a simple guideline is to buy life insurance that is equal to five to seven times your annual income.

There are several different types of life insurance available to suit your needs and budget.

Permanent life insurance provides lifelong protection, and is also known by such names as whole life, universal life and variable life. As long as you pay premiums, the death benefit will always be there. Plus, in some cases, an investment or cash value grows throughout the life of the policy, increasing the amount you leave to your beneficiary.

Term life insurance is a specified amount of life insurance coverage, at a guaranteed rate, for a specified period of time (and is renewable at end of term). Term life insurance pays a benefit only if you die during the term and is often used to cover specific needs that will disappear in time (a mortgage, for example).

CRITICAL ILLNESS

Getting sick isn't something any of us like to think about. But it happens. Thanks to improvements in healthy living and medical science there's a good chance you'll recover and get on with your life. But getting better costs money.

The cost to treat and cope with a critical illness is often significant and unexpected. That's where critical illness insurance can help. It provides a cash benefit if you're diagnosed with one of the covered conditions described in your contract and you survive the waiting period.

DISABILITY INSURANCE

What would you do if you couldn't work for a period of time due to a condition or injury such as a back injury, depression or osteoarthritis? If you need to protect your income source, particularly if you're the primary source of income or you run your own business, you may want to consider disability insurance.

Disability income will replace your salary or wages by providing monthly benefits in the event of accident or illness.

LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE

Long term care (LTC) insurance offers a financial benefit if you become functionally dependent and satisfy a waiting period. Functional dependence means you require substantial assistance with daily living activities or supervision because of a cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's disease. LTC insurance can help protect you against the high costs of nursing homes and personal care, preserving your retirement savings, the equity in your home and the inheritance you've planned for your loved ones.

COMBINATION INSURANCE

In a recent survey¹, close to 70 per cent of Canadians said they were concerned about the financial impact of being unable to work because of illness or injury. Yet only eight per cent said they own individual life, disability and critical illness insurance. If the cost of owning three stand-alone insurance policies is too expensive, or you want to top up group coverage or existing individual coverage, you may want to consider a combination insurance solution. With combination insurance, you gain protection against life's major risks with one affordable and easy-to-manage solution — only one payment, and one program to manage.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF INSURANCE?

Insurance is one of those things you hope you'll never need to use... but you're glad to have the coverage, just in case. To determine your insurance needs, an evaluation with an advisor is the best course of action. There are also online tools (insureright.ca) that may help you identify the factors to consider in your financial plan.



¹ The Manulife Financial survey was conducted with 1,000 Canadian homeowners between the ages of 30 and 50 with household income of \$50,000–\$150,000 per annum. It was conducted online by Research House from March 7–15, 2011.

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