





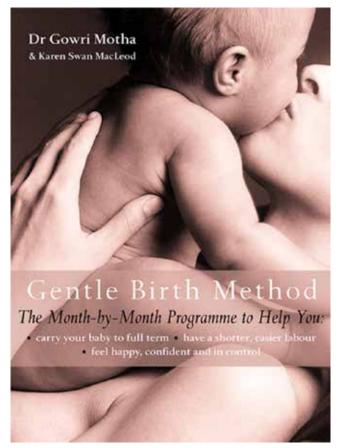
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

It is with great happiness that I share with you a milestone – BloomLife Hospital completed 16 years of service in the healthcare sector on 9th March 2025! It was a moment of immense happiness, pride and gratitude for all of us in this organisation, and we thank every one of you for helping us reach this milestone.

As with any major life event, this one, too, got me thinking.

When I was younger, I used to hear people say that a successful man has a woman standing behind him. Today, I have come to understand that both successful men and women have an entire community standing behind them!

Given the varied roles and responsibilities we handle, it is essential that we have a network of supporters to help us balance our many responsibilities with ease. Such a support system is not idealistic or a luxury – it is a necessity to ensure that we are able to fulfil our responsibilities while keeping ourselves in good health.

This is where many of my patients protest, "But we cannot afford help!" I have to gently remind them that help is not always paid for – it can be requested, sought, and received. Whether it is your parents, colleagues or friends, a genuine request for help will find a solution in some way. The important thing is to ask – hesitation or shyness will not get us anywhere and will only add to our burden. On the other hand, it is also important that we extend a helping hand whenever we can, particularly when we are aware that the person is handling more than usual in their lives. Such moves will help all of us come closer and create strong bonds.

We celebrate several 'days' in the year – with the recent Women's Day being a popular one. What we try to reiterate during each of these occasions is the effort to extend respect and appreciation to one another. If we are able to do the same on a daily basis, to the best of our ability, our celebrations will become much more fulfilling!

Dr. Kavitha Gautham

Managing Director, BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

We want to hear from you! Please keep sending your feedback, suggestions and questions to info@bloomhealthcare.in.

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Editorial Team:

Dr. Kavitha Gautham Anita Krishnaswamy

Marketing and Distribution:

R. Kavitha Lakshmi

R. Eniya Thendral

K. Thiyagaraj

D. Mangaiyarkarasi

Contributors:

Dr. Aiswarya M. Nair | Ms. Anita Krishnaswamy Dr. Aravind Ravichandran | Dr. D. Balakumaran Dr. Nalini T. | Dr. Rija Prathab | Ms. Shweta R.

Content Support & Design:

SARAS Works, Chennai

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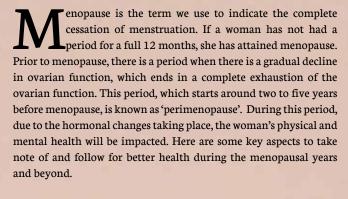
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Better Health During MENOPAUSE



Dr. Nalini T.Senior Consultant –
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

Good health habits
become particularly
relevant and important
for women when they
move towards menopause.
We look at key aspects to
take note of to improve
one's health and
maintain it during
these crucial years.



- Women need to assess their **bone mineral density** when they start to start to notice signs of perimenopause and later when they attain menopause. This is because the onset of menopause brings with it a cessation of production of estrogen, a hormone that is critical for bone health. Hence, making sure that their bone mineral density is in an acceptable range or getting advice on suitable supplements (for calcium and Vitamin D) to improve it is essential.
- Physical well-being needs to be given priority (even if it wasn't until this point) to keep up overall fitness and health. Following a regular exercise and/or yoga routine can help in maintaining good physical fitness and recommended BMI. Keeping one's weight in check is important because even small falls can lead to major injuries or fractures if the person is overweight.
- Mental health can take a hit during perimenopause. Mood swings, forgetfulness, insomnia and depression are among the conditions that are commonly experienced during this period. Seeking counselling and guidance on medication (if needed) is essential to handle such conditions.
- Following a balanced, nutritious diet is a habit we need to inculcate from birth not at any specific point in our life. However, when a woman reaches menopause, she faces a faster decline in health due to hormonal changes and advancing age. Priority should be given to consuming food items rich in calcium and protein while minimising intake of carbs. Multivitamin supplements and antioxidants may be taken on the doctor's advice.
- Regular health check-ups should become a norm even as one reaches their 40s. In the menopausal period, a health check-up that includes bone mineral density, cardiovascular health, echocardiogram and ECG, blood test, lipid profile and so on. These tests help to provide an indication of overall health and of areas that may need attention. ◆



When does your child go from 'chubby' to 'obese'?

e are seeing more and more children packing on pounds than is normal for them, and veering on the edge of obesity well before they enter their teens. The danger with such a development is that it may lead to early onset of other health conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. However, as many people still regard chubby kids as a representation of good nourishment and care, they fail to pay close attention to their child's weight gain.

So, where does the problem begin?

First, we need to understand the function of 'baby fat'.

As by nature's design, babies retain an extra layer of fat in their bodies at least until six months or so. This is to regulate the baby's internal body temperature and to ensure that the baby has some reserves of fat and nutrients to draw on. This is why even a child who is exclusively breastfed will be on the chubby side. However, after the child crosses the threshold of six months, this 'baby fat' tends to get absorbed as the child's metabolic activity begins to increase.

Two things happen when the child crosses six months: One, the child is introduced to new foods (apart from breast milk. Two, the child starts to move around and explore the immediate surroundings, so he/she has a sudden spurt of activity. This usually leads to the child starting to lose weight.

Then, after the child turns one year old, a new development takes place: The child starts to explore new foods. With time, he/she is introduced to the world of sugary foods and drinks, and fried snacks. As parents (and paediatricians) will tell you, a child can get addicted very quickly to these newfound sources of dopamine rushes. This, in turn, means a tendency to over-indulge in these foods, which are very high in calories, thus leading to excess weight gain. However, many parents find it hard to see this weight gain as unnatural or unhealthy. When I point it out, I usually get one or more of the following responses:

"But he/she is just a baby – all the extra pounds will just melt away once they get their growth spurt."

"It feels heartless to deprive my child of chocolate and snacks."

If you thought obesity was an 'adult' problem, think again. Many parents find it hard to distinguish between 'baby fat' and the first signs of unhealthy weight gain in their child – and fail to address the problem in its early stages. We take a closer look at the issue and the best way



Dr. D. BalakumaranHead of Paediatrics
BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.



"They need to eat all they can to get the needed nutrition during their growing years."

Please understand, even in children, excess weight is not healthy.

Being overweight or excessively plump is not good for a child. Excess fat does not help a child grow faster or more. In fact, continuous excess weight gain may lead to childhood obesity, which will entail a whole host of other health issues. For good health, growth and development, a child needs a balance of all nutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and fibre), and sufficient physical activity.

So, what can you do as a parent?

We need to understand that eating patterns developed as early as six months to a year will play an important role in influencing the health of the child in the long term. In terms of activity, too, if the child begins to form a habitual preference for physical or sedentary activities, it will impact his/her overall growth, development and health. Here are some things you can do as a parent to help your child to inculcate healthy habits at a young age.

Introduce a wide range of vegetables and fruits: When you are beginning the process of weaning your child and introducing solid foods, make an effort to include a wide range of vegetables and fruits. This will benefit your child in two ways: One, he/she will get accustomed to a wider range of tastes, which will help them explore and enjoy varied foods as they grow older. Two, this will help your child get the required nutrients from multiple sources.

Focus on 'plate building': In many cases, when a parent is told that their child is gaining too much weight, they may cut down on things like ghee or butter but continue to serve large portions of rice or other carbs. This is not helpful in the long run. A better approach is to focus on the 'plate' and 'build' it up to be healthy. In other words, a meal that comprises of a good serving of vegetables and fruits, and foods to provide carbohydrates, protein and fats in required proportions, can help the child gain the necessary nutrition without excess calorie intake.

Don't restrict – moderate: Completely restricting a child from indulging in cake, chocolates, chips, soft drinks or such foods is literally impossible, and is not advisable as well. Today, children constantly see images and information about such foods, and will be offered one or more of these foods at school and on social occasions. Complete deprivation can push a child to become unhappy, and they may over-indulge in such foods in secret. Instead, help your child to understand how to moderate their intake. If they have indulged in large amounts of ultra-processed foods on one day, they can keep indulgence to a minimum for a week to make up for it. Remember, this can work only if the child is brought onboard as an 'equal' participant and not as a form of forced disciplinary action.



Being overweight or excessively plump is not good for a child. Excess fat does not help a child grow faster or more. For good health, growth and development, a child needs a balance of all nutrients and sufficient physical activity.

Limit screen time: Children tend to become addicted to the TV or iPad quickly, which leads to them becoming sedentary — one of the key reasons behind the rise in childhood obesity. Helping your child to develop hobbies in line with their interests is important to help them grow into all-rounded individuals. The best way to do this is to lead by example. Put away your phone / devices when you are with your child, and spend time doing things together as a family.

Engage in physical activities with your child: With busy work schedules and demanding lifestyles, parents find it difficult to chalk out chunks of time to engage in physical activities with their children. However, this has to be given priority if the habit is to become deep-rooted. Take your child to the park regularly or go swimming or cycling together.

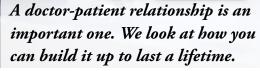
Apart from introducing a love for physical activity, it will strengthen the bond between you both – which you will cherish forever!





(Part 1)

Prescription for a **Better Relationship**with Your **Doctor**



Anita Krishnaswamy

CEO, BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

What are some things we can do as patients to forge a strong relationship with the doctor?

This is a very relevant question — and one that is very encouraging as it shows a heightened sensitivity on the part of the patient to form a strong, mutually rewarding relationship. Moreover, when a person has a strong relationship with their doctor, a consultation is not seen as an effort at diagnosis but as the first step towards healing — which is half the issue resolved.

The foundation of a good relationship of any kind is trust – on part of both parties who are part of the relationship.

In this case of a doctor and their patient, the relationship begins with a specific aim. The patient comes to a doctor seeking a solution for a health issue he/she is facing. Typically, the person would have a strong reason for deciding to go to that specific doctor. They may have spoken to a close friend or family member, read something about the doctor, or decided that the institution is good and hence the doctor must be good, too. There is an expectation of a positive outcome, and that lays the first level of trust.

On the doctor's side, when they see a patient, they implicitly assume this trust — and take it that it is strong enough for the patient to share all details about their health — over and above the issue they are facing at present. Details such as the person's health history, familial medical issues, even one-off health problems. From a doctor's point of view, all the information that is shared is important in analysing the root cause of the symptoms, which is essential for charting out the course of treatment. If they feel that information is not sufficiently forthcoming, they may probe further and ask more questions, with the hope that the patient will not hold anything back.

If this exchange takes place with no resistance to sharing on the patient's part, we have the recipe for a strong relationship in the long run. Hence, the onus is on the patient to be completely open and share all their health-related (physical and mental) details. In some cases, especially when the doctor is having a very busy day, the patient might decide to share only details relevant to their current health issue. Rather than make that decision as a patient, it is better to share all details — and not filter it.

There is one more important aspect to take note of – which I will share in the following issue.



Dr. Aiswarya M. Nair Consultant - General Medicine BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

MOUTH

Mouth ulcers can be painful and cause extreme discomfort. Why do they develop, and when should one seek medical help in handling them?

outh ulcers are painful lesions that can develop anywhere inside the mouth – on the inner cheeks, tongue, gums, the roof of the mouth or palate, the floor of the mouth, and the underside of the tongue. They are generally small, round, or oval sores with a white or yellowish center and a red border. Depending on the cause and severity of the condition, they can appear as a single lesion or in clusters. While some ulcers may heal on their own over time, others may persist and cause extreme discomfort, thereby requiring medical intervention.

Common Causes of Mouth Ulcers

Mouth ulcers can occur due to a wide variety of reasons, ranging from simple irritations to more complex medical conditions.

- Physical Trauma from bruxism or teeth grinding, accidentally biting oneself on the inside of the cheek or tongue while chewing, using a toothbrush with hard bristles or brushing aggressively, or use of dental appliances like braces or dentures.
- Nutritional Deficiencies, particularly of Vitamin B12, which
 plays an important role in maintaining the health of the cells
 lining the mouth. Iron deficiency may also manifest as mouth
 ulcers. Young girls and women, and people who follow a
 vegetarian diet are susceptible to both deficiencies.
- Allergic Reactions to certain substances, such as painkillers, cosmetics or oral hygiene products like toothpaste, mouthwashes and lip balms.



• Stress, Emotional Upheavals or Hormonal Changes, which may impact the body's immune function. Young women are especially susceptible to subsidiary symptoms such as sensitivity to sunlight, hair loss, in tandem with recurrent mouth ulcers.

• Underlying Health Conditions, including gastrointestinal disorders such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) or autoimmune conditions like oral lichen planus, which can cause an outbreak of mouth ulcers. It is important to note that gastric conditions may also result in parallel symptoms such as frequent burping, loss of appetite and increased intolerance towards spicy foods.

Mouth ulcers can cause a great deal of discomfort, particularly in terms of eating or speaking. In most cases, topical medication may be advised.

If the shape and/or appearance of mouth ulcers changes, if the condition doesn't respond to topical medication even after a week, or if the person experiences a fever or some other health issue soon after the outbreak of mouth ulcers, it is important to seek medical advice to rule out any serious health conditions. Furthermore, if a person seems to be experiencing outbreak of mouth ulcers frequently, they should consult a physician for an evaluation to pin down the underlying cause and chart out a course of treatment.







Dr. Aravind RavichandranConsultant – Reproductive
Medicine & Fertility
BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

While infertility in general is a highly sensitive health aspect, male infertility presents its own set of challenges, particularly in terms of laying out exactly the exact root cause of the condition. In this article, we begin a discussion on some of the main causes of male infertility and begin to look at one of the main tests used to determine the same.

bout one in six couples approach fertility clinics while facing difficulties in conceiving naturally. In almost 40% of such cases, the male partner would be a major contributor. Before understanding the reasons why male infertility unfolds, it is prudent to shed light on the normal biological processes that maintain normal sperm production (spermatogenesis).

Even though the structural anatomy of the male sex organs appears to be simple and straightforward, the physiology that supports sperm production is highly complex. On average, it takes 65 to 75 days for mature spermatozoa to be generated. The male reproductive pathway that supports spermatogenesis consists of the following structures in serial order, moving from the site of production of sperm to its expulsion:

- Bilateral testicles located within the scrotal sac primary site of sperm and testosterone production.
- Epididymis site of sperm storage and maturation.
- Vas deferens helps in transportation of the sperm to the seminal vesicles
- Seminal vesicles glands that add volume to the semen sample and offer nourishment to the sperm during its transit
- Prostate a gland that secretes a fluid that initially coagulates and subsequently liquefies semen after expulsion
- Urethra final pathway through which semen (and also urine) is expelled.



The sex hormones, namely Follicular-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) from the pituitary gland present at the base of the brain, control the testicular machinery. The FSH and LH direct the production of sperms and testosterone (the primary male hormone) respectively. An intact physiological axis is very important to sustain spermatogenesis.

A normal physiology is subject to interplay between a host of factors like structural integrity, the hormonal input, genetics, coexisting medical conditions, drug intake, lifestyle choices (including diet, physical activity and occupational conditions), history of trauma, stress, and personal habits like smoking and alcohol consumption — which are capable of significantly affecting sperm quality and quantity. Research is still on in these areas to understand the exact mechanisms that cause the decline.

Complexities in Understanding Male Infertility

Often, clinicians are faced with patient queries as to what is the exact root cause of abnormal sperm parameters. On many occasions, it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of infertility due to

this complexity, leading to a level of mystery and frustration for both couples and clinicians alike.

Most of the time, male infertility is totally unsuspected. They may be totally asymptomatic and with normal sexual function to foresee any decline in reproductive health or seek a consultation. On many occasions, we only identify issues with the male partner after performing a routine semen analysis.

Semen Analysis and Interpretation

Semen analysis is still the preliminary and most important test for evaluating a male partner. A routine semen analysis throws light on the sperm concentration (sperm count in the ejaculate), sperm motility (the percentage of moving sperms) and sperm morphology (the percentage of normally shaped sperms). A normal semen analysis should contain at least 15 million sperm/mL of semen. At least 32% of the sperm should be progressively motile, and at least 4% should have a normal shape. Deviation in any one or multiple parameters may hinder the probability of conception.

The interpretation of the results of a semen analysis is not always straightforward. Sperm parameters can also fluctuate over time in an individual, making it difficult to rely on a single test. So, it is always necessary to repeat a semen analysis after a period of at least four weeks to establish a persistent abnormality. Also, the threshold of parameters used to communicate a normal report is based on a geographical, population-based study of men who have conceived naturally and often uses a lower reference limit to categorise semen abnormalities. Subtle deviations in the report might not always indicate a fertility issue and it lacks the ability to throw light on the fertilisation potential of the sperm. Also lack of standardisation in how the sample is analysed and reported, varies across laboratories adding to challenges in interpretation.

As of date, in most male partners with abnormal sperm production, the exact cause remains a mystery. But ongoing research exploring the intricacies of the basic biology behind sperm production could one day lead to more refined treatment options ranging from reversal of the condition to less complex interventions to renewed hope for those with severe abnormalities that preclude biological chances. •

Male infertility is further understood and evaluated by more than just sperm tests. We will look into some other aspects of testing in the upcoming issue.

Small Swaps Benefits!

Shweta R. Clinical Dietitian BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

Healthy eating isn't about restriction, it's about making mindful choices. By swapping out a few ingredients here and there, you can enjoy your favorite meals while improving your overall health and well-being.

ood is more than just fuel – it's comfort, memories, and love on a plate. From childhood favorites to family traditions, every meal tells a story. However, with growing concerns over health and well-being, there is a feeling that we have to give up our favourites to favour our health.

What if we told you that there is a simpler way? That you could enjoy the foods you love while making them healthier? No drastic diets, no giving up on taste. Just small, mindful swaps that make a big difference! Whether it's your morning routine, midday meal, or evening cravings, these simple changes will help you nourish your body while keeping up the 'joy' in each bite. Ready to make your plate a little

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Breakfast: Start Strong, Stay Energised

Swap Sugary cereals > Whole grain options Most boxed cereals are loaded with sugar and offer little fiber. Instead, go for rolled oats, muesli, or homemade granola with nuts and seeds.

Swap White bread or rava upma > Millet or broken wheat upma

Instead of maida-based bread or rava upma, try multi-grain or whole wheat bread, or go for millet upma (prepared with bajra or foxtail millet). These swaps add fiber and keep you full longer.

Swap White bread toast > Whole grain or sourdough bread

sourdough bread, which provide more fibre and keep you full longer.

Swap Poori > Phulka or millet rotis

We all love a crispy poori, but having it regularly isn't the best idea. Instead, opt for soft phulkas puffed over fire, jowar rotis, or spicy, tasty pesarattu, which are lighter on the stomach as well.

Swap Sugar in tea or coffee > Jaggery or no-sugar versions

If you start your day with a cup of chai or filter coffee, replace white sugar with jaggery or palm sugar. Try going without sugar as well. Better yet, try herbal teas like tulsi or cinnamon tea, which naturally support metabolism.



Instead of a potato-based curry, make a subzi with fibre-rich veggies like beans, carrots, and spinach. Sprouted moong or chana stir-fry is another great way to add protein and micronutrients.

Swap Store-bought pickles > Homemade fermented sides

Instead of pickles loaded with preservatives, try fermented options like simple brined mango pickle, homemade fermented beet/carrot drink) or probiotic-rich buttermilk.

Swap Regular dal > Dal with greens or sprouted dal

Adding methi, drumstick leaves, or palak to your dal boosts the iron and fiber content. Sprouted dal is another way to increase protein intake.

Swap Flavoured yogurt > Plain yogurt with fresh fruits

Flavoured yogurts may seem healthy but they are packed with added sugars. Opt for plain yogurt or curd and mix in fresh fruits or a drizzle of honey.

Swap Packaged juice > Whole fruits or freshly squeezed juice

Store-bought juice lacks fibre and is high in sugar. Eating whole fruits or making a fresh, fiber-rich smoothie is a much better way to enjoy your fruit!

Swap White Rice > Brown Rice, Quinoa, or Millets

White rice is low in fiber and digests quickly, leading to energy crashes. Brown rice, quinoa, or millets are packed with fiber and essential nutrients to keep you going.

Swap Creamy salad dressing > curd or lemon-based dressings

Mayonnaise or cream-based dressings add unnecessary fat and calories. Try curd- or lemon juice-based dressings for a lighter, fresher taste.

Swap Fried sides > Roasted or grilled options

Instead of deep-fried foods, choose grilled, baked or air-fried versions. Roasted sweet

potatoes, grilled paneer, or air-fried veggies are great alternatives.

Swap Sugary drinks > Infused water or coconut water

Soft drinks and sugary beverages lead to energy crashes. Infused water with lemon and mint, herbal teas, or coconut water keep you hydrated and refreshed.

Evening Snacks: Smart Bites

Swap Packaged chips, biscuits and namkeen > Roasted nuts or seeds

Chips and processed snacks contain trans fat and excessive salt and sugar. Roasted almonds, walnuts, or sunflower seeds provide a satisfying crunch with healthy fats and protein.

Swap Candy or chocolate bars > Dark chocolate or energy balls

If you crave something sweet, swap milk chocolate bars for dark chocolate (70% cocoa or more) or homemade energy balls prepared with dates, nuts, and cocoa.

Swap Cold coffee > Iced black coffee or protein shake

Frappes and cold coffees are loaded with sugar and cream. A homemade iced black coffee or a protein shake with banana and peanut butter is a healthier pick-me-up.

Swap Aerated drinks > Nimbu pani or buttermilk

Instead of aerated drinks, refresh yourself with nimbu pani (without sugar), coconut water, or chaas with jeera and ginger.

If you crave something sweet, swap milk chocolate bars for dark chocolate (70% cocoa or more) or homemade energy balls made with dates, nuts, and cocoa.

Dinner: Light, Nutritious, and Restful

Swap Rich, cream-based gravies > Tomato or yogurt-based curries

Creamy, buttery gravies are delicious but they add unnecessary fat - and should be treated as an occasional indulgence. Tomato-based curries, yogurt marinades, or coconut milk alternatives provide the same richness with better nutrition. They're just as flavourful but much lighter.

Swap Late-night desserts > Herbal tea or dark chocolate

A sugar-laden dessert before bed can disrupt sleep. Instead, enjoy a cup of chamomile tea, a small piece of dark chocolate, or warm almond milk with cinnamon.

Swap Wheat rotis > Millet rotis or dosa

Instead of wheat rotis at night, try bajra or ragi rotis, which are easier to digest. A dosa made with moong dal or millets is also a great alternative.

Swap White rice with curd > Millets with buttermilk

A bowl of white rice with curd is comforting but it can be heavy at night. Instead, try fermented millet porridge (like ragi kanji) or a bowl of thin buttermilk with jeera.





When should I get my own health insurance?

Dr. Rija Prathab

Manager – Billing & Insurance BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

How soon should an individual get their own health insurance? Pretty much as soon as they transition out of a family plan or turn 18. Why? We look into the reasons.



ealth insurance is a vital financial tool that provides coverage for medical expenses and protects against unexpected healthcare costs. However, a question that many people ask is about the age when they should start looking at getting a personal health insurance policy, as opposed to being dependents on their parents' or family plans.

Health Insurance for Children

Health insurance companies typically offer coverage for children under their parents' plans up to a certain age – in most cases, this is 18 years but it can vary with some companies extending coverage up to 25 years if the person is still studying full-time and is a dependent. Once the child reaches the age limit for dependent coverage, they are no longer eligible for coverage on the family plan and need to get an individual policy. This is particularly important for young adults as they move into full-time employment or become independent of their family.

Health Insurance for Young Adults

As a young adult, health insurance may not seem like an immediate concern. However, accidents or illnesses can occur unexpectedly, and the resultant medical bills can become a heavy burden. Hence,

planning for individual health insurance is essential. As a best practice, it is recommended that individuals who have crossed 18 years of age get their own health insurance policy, even if they continue to be on the family plan.

- Lower Premiums and More Affordable Coverage: The cost of health insurance is lower when a person is younger and in good health. Moreover, some insurance providers offer plans specifically designed for young adults who are ageing out of their family coverage, with good coverage at a lower cost.
- Early Coverage for Pre-Existing Conditions: Many health
 insurance plans have waiting periods for pre-existing conditions,
 and this waiting period can range from a few months to several
 years. By purchasing individual health insurance early, the
 person will be covered in case of any medical issues that may
 arise down the road.
- Greater Flexibility and Control: As a young adult, a person can invest in an individual health insurance policy that allows them to customise their coverage, and choose additional benefits that are most relevant to their lifestyle. Moreover, having an individual health insurance policy removes hassles of access and availability particularly if the person is moving to a new location.

If you have any specific queries related to medical insurance aspects, write to us at info@bloomhealthcare.in



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