

I'm looking for a job. How can I tell if an employer is offering a good insurance benefit package?

Ultimately, an employer is offering a good insurance benefit package if it's one that appeals to you and meets your needs. But here are some specific things you might look for.

Perhaps the most important piece is the health insurance offered. You'll want coverage that adequately meets your medical needs. Hopefully, it will also allow you to continue seeing your current doctors and health-care providers. A complete package would offer dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage as well. And don't forget to find out how much you'll pay for health insurance--ideally, the employer will pay all or most of the premium cost for a single person.

Most large employers offer some group life insurance coverage. A basic package would provide term insurance coverage on your life in an amount at least equal to your annual salary. A more generous package would provide coverage for your spouse, domestic partner, or children, and would allow you to purchase low-cost supplemental life insurance.

If you get sick or injured and can't work, disability insurance replaces a portion of your income. Many employers offer short-term disability insurance that covers you for up to two years, but a good benefit package will also include long-term disability coverage. Again, the best package is one for which the employer pays all or most of the insurance premium.

Finally, a good benefit package might also offer you the chance to buy other types of coverage (e.g., long-term care or auto insurance) at group rates.

Group disability premiums are based on your age, sex, occupation and the amount of potential lost income you are trying to protect.

The cost of group life insurance depend on factors such as age, amount of insurance purchased, and may require a health questionnaire and/or a medical exam.

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