



When completing an application for insurance, a number of personal questions will be asked. Depending on the type of insurance, these might include questions about age, health and medical history, personal activities, drinking and smoking habits, driving history, or any past insurance claims.

### Insurance and Medical Information

For some forms of insurance, medical conditions and history will affect the risk presented to the insurance company. These types of insurance include income protection and life insurance, consumer credit insurance and travel insurance.

In these cases, a medical questionnaire will be included as part of an application. This questionnaire asks for details about personal medical history and information about any disease or disorders that are likely to increase the probability of a claim. The questionnaire might also ask about any family medical history that could increase risk of developing a hereditary disease. The insurer might ask for a medical examination and/or blood tests. The insurer might also request access medical records and ask medical practitioners questions about medical history.

Insurance companies can only consider information made available to them and

must use that information to build a picture of the risk they are being asked to cover. This can be difficult to do when relying on answers to questions in application forms and on opinions provided by medical practitioners as, frequently, insufficient information is provided. It is therefore valuable to provide the insurance company with full details of medical history.

If a claim is made due to a medical condition, the insurance company will probably want to access medical records to see whether the condition existed before the policy, in which case they might not be required to pay the claim.

### Duty of disclosure

This is the duty to disclose all relevant matters to the insurer that are known to be relevant, or that a reasonable person would know to be relevant, to the insurer's decision to accept an application. If no relevant information is provided to the insurer, then they might refuse to pay a claim or may even be able to

cancel a policy from the date it commenced.

When answering questions about medical conditions, the duty of disclosure means disclosing past or present mental illness, even if the applicant is currently well and does not intend to make any claims relating to mental illness.

### What does this mean?

If you do not tell the insurer something that they have asked about, then they can either cancel your contract or reduce your benefits.

### Privacy and Information

The insurance industry by law must safeguard the privacy of its customers.

All insurance companies must comply with ten Privacy Principles, which relate to:

1. Collection
2. Use and disclosure
3. Data quality
4. Data security
5. Openness
6. Access and correction
7. Identifiers
8. Anonymity
9. Transborder data flows
10. Sensitive information

