I think I need life insurance. Where do I start?

Start with the people, the responsibilities and the years ahead.

The question underneath the question

You do not have to choose a policy before you know what you want it to do. Start by naming the people who would feel the financial effect of your death. That could be a spouse, children, a parent, a business partner or someone who relies on the care you provide.

Make the job concrete

Write a plain sentence: "If I died, I would want this money to help with ___." Think about ordinary bills, a transition period, dependent care and obligations that would remain. Count unpaid work too. Someone may need to arrange and pay for tasks you currently handle.

Look at what already exists

Find your employer benefits summary and any personal policy statements. Note the coverage amount, owner, beneficiaries and any end date. A benefit you remember from an old job may not describe what you have today. Ask the administrator to confirm the current position.

Your first useful outcome

Aim for a short list of needs and questions. You can investigate a product after you understand the problem. Keep your notes private; no account numbers or personal records are needed to read this guide.

MY SITUATION IN ONE SENTENCE

Private notes - keep this copy

OFFICIAL / PRIMARY REFERENCES - TAP TO READ

NAIC: life insurance basics
Texas DOI: buying life insurance

02 Compare with confidence

Life insurance: where to start

Compare three things first

Purpose: what would the benefit need to accomplish? Duration: which responsibilities have an ending, and which might continue? Affordability: what payment could you sustain through an ordinary difficult month? Write these separately so a low starting price does not answer every question for you.

Know the broad categories

Term life covers a stated period and generally does not build cash value. Permanent coverage is designed for longer protection and may include cash value, with premiums, guarantees and conditions that depend on the contract. Neither label tells you whether a particular policy fits your situation.

A comparison checklist

Ask for the same benefit amount when comparing proposals. Identify how long premiums stay level, when coverage can end, what renewal or conversion means, and what is guaranteed. For permanent coverage, also examine funding requirements, early surrender values and the effects of loans.

Common mistakes to avoid

Do not let a slogan replace the needs discussion. Do not assume a workplace benefit follows you forever. Do not cancel existing insurance while a replacement is only an application. First confirm the new coverage, effective date and consequences with the appropriate professionals.

THE QUESTION I WANT ANSWERED FIRST

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03 Prepare for a conversation

Life insurance: where to start

Prepare in ten quiet minutes

On paper, list who depends on you, the responsibilities you would want covered, the approximate years involved and the policies you believe exist. Mark anything uncertain with a question mark. An honest gap in your notes is more useful than a guessed answer.

Bring these questions

What information is needed to estimate the protection gap? Which needs are temporary and which may last longer? What would change the comparison? Which parts of a proposal are guaranteed? How will we confirm the policy is actually active?

Set the pace of the conversation

You can say: "I am starting from the beginning. Help me understand the job of the coverage before we discuss a product." Ask Derek which products and states he is authorized to help with, and who else should be involved if your question is outside that scope.

A useful stopping point

Leave with the next fact to verify, the person responsible and any deadline. You do not need to make every decision in the first conversation.

A clearer next step starts here.

BOOK A CONVERSATION **READ THIS ONLINE** **CALL DEREK**

Derek Patterson | (760) 504-4939
Start with your situation and state. Keep health records and detailed finances private.

General education, not a quote, eligibility decision or recommendation to buy or replace coverage. Terms and availability vary. Verify authorization, plan rules and deadlines with the appropriate professional or official program.

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