



FINANCIAL WISDOM

- WEALTH BUILDER -

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Have You Protected Your Most Valuable Asset?

Here's a question that most people don't think about: What's your most valuable asset? Your house? Your investments? Maybe your car? Actually, it's none of those. Your most valuable asset is **your ability to earn an income**. It's the engine that keeps everything else in your financial life running—your mortgage, your groceries, your kids' sports fees, your future plans. And yet, it's often the one thing people *forget* to protect.

Most of us assume we'll wake up tomorrow, head to work, and bring home a paycheck like always. But what if you couldn't? What if an illness or accident suddenly took that ability away?

Here's the truth: the risk of disability is far more real—and common—than many people realize. We insure our homes, our vehicles, our health, our lives... but when it comes to protecting our income, many of us leave a huge gap. And statistically, disability is the *most likely* threat we face. Consider this:

- Only 1 in 88 homes catch fire in a year (1).
- About 1 in 21 vehicles are in an accident (2)
- But 1 in 3 Canadians will be disabled for 90 days or more before age 65 (3)

That last stat? That's the one that should really make you pause. **If you're 25, you have a 53.7% chance of facing a disability lasting at least 90 days before retirement (4).** At 35, the chance is just over 50%. Even at 45, it's still around 44%. And here's the kicker: most of these disabilities aren't the result of dramatic accidents. They're due to illnesses—things like back problems, cancer, heart conditions, or mental health challenges.

By the time you're in your 60s, less than 1 in 10 disability claims are accident-related. That means workers' compensation—often thought of as a safety net—won't apply to most situations.

Yes, government programs like CPP and EI offer some support. But they're limited. As of 2024, CPP disability maxes out around \$1,606 a month. EI gives about \$668 a week—for anywhere between 14 weeks to a maximum of 45 weeks. Could you live on that? Could your family live on that? Ask yourself:

- If I got sick or injured and couldn't work for six months, or a year, what would I do?
- How long would my savings last?
- Would I need to borrow money? Move? Depend on family?
- Would my retirement plans get wiped out?

If those questions make you uneasy, it's time to think seriously about disability insurance. It's not just a product—it's peace of mind.

Bottom line: you protect your home and your car. Don't forget to protect you—because without your income, everything else becomes harder to hang on to.

- (1) National Fire Protection Association: *Residential Fires*; 2011
- (2) Insurance and Liability Resource Centre for Nonprofits, 2004
- (3) Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association: *A Guide to Disability Insurance*; 2012.
- (4) Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association *Disability Tables*, Society of Actuaries; 1985

Protect your most valuable asset – it the right thing to do.



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