



POLMED[®]

OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

YOUR CARE

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2018



"A fit, healthy body - that is the best fashion statement."
- Jess C. Scott

Dear Member

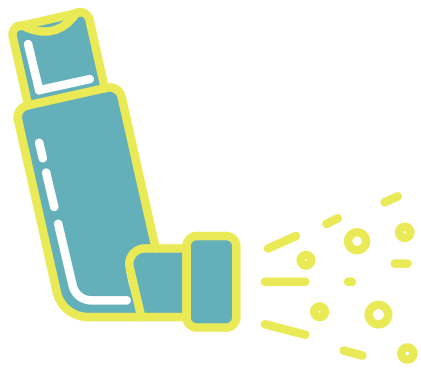
Half of the year has already come and gone, so this might be the perfect time for you to reflect on your 2018 health journey. If you're not quite on track, remember: it's never too late to take the steps needed to reach your health goals.

Our features this month:

- We bring you a handy guide to **keep your asthma under control**.
- We illustrate how to 'plate up' the right way with **nutritious and delicious diabetic meals**.
- We uncover the pitfalls of 'doctor shopping' and advise why **consulting one doctor** is best.
- We look at **chronic illness in children** and the protective role that good eating habits and a healthy lifestyle can play.

Enjoy the read!

POLMED YOUR CARE Support Team



Control your asthma

Asthma is a chronic condition but with treatment, even serious asthmatics can lead a normal life. Follow our handy guide to keep your asthma under control.

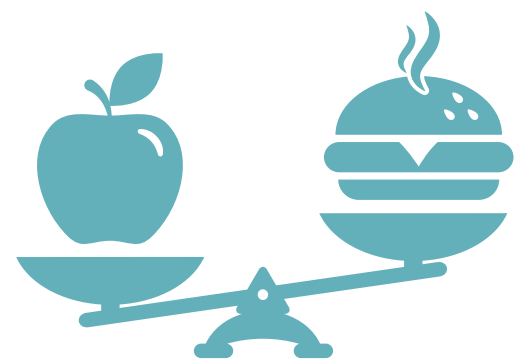
[Read more ...](#)



Why less is more

Be mindful of the pitfalls of 'doctor shopping'. The more GPs you see, the greater the chance of miscommunication and overtreatment.

[Read more ...](#)



Designer plates

Living with diabetes requires constant attention to diet. We list the do's and don'ts for dishing up healthy, nutritious and delicious diabetic meals.

[Read more ...](#)



Chronic illness in children

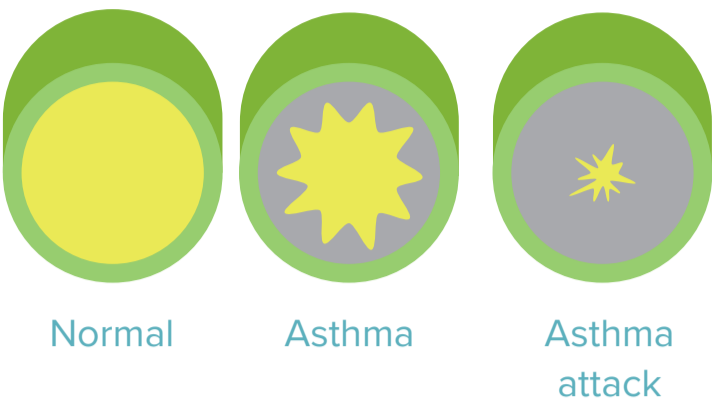
Some children develop chronic illness as a result of genetic (inherited) conditions, environmental factors, or a combination of both.

[Read more ...](#)

If you have any questions or need more information, please call POLMED on 0860 765 633 (select the option for the Disease Management Programme), or send an email to polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za with your membership number and contact details.



KEEP YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL



ASTHMA HAS TWO MAIN CAUSES:

1. A tightening of airway muscles
2. Inflammation and swelling of airways

Asthma is a very common condition and even serious asthmatics can lead a normal life with treatment.

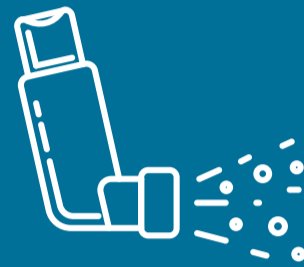
SPOT AND STOP THE TRIGGERS

Common triggers include:



LEARN HOW TO USE YOUR INHALER

- Correct technique is crucial!
- Speak to your doctor about technique and frequency.



Only **49%** of people use their inhaler correctly!

EXERCISE HELPS!

Regular exercise:



Walking, swimming or jogging are good options



David Beckham has asthma... but it didn't stop him.

BREATHE DEEPER

- Practice regular, deep breathing techniques
- Explore physiotherapy

ALWAYS TAKE YOUR MEDICATION

- Follow your doctor's orders... even when feeling better
- Rather use it sooner and more frequently than not

ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Use this handy guide to manage your own or a loved one's asthma – perfect to stick on your refrigerator for easy reference. **Ask your doctor to complete this action plan.**

Patient Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Date: _____
 Dr Name: _____ Dr contact number: _____

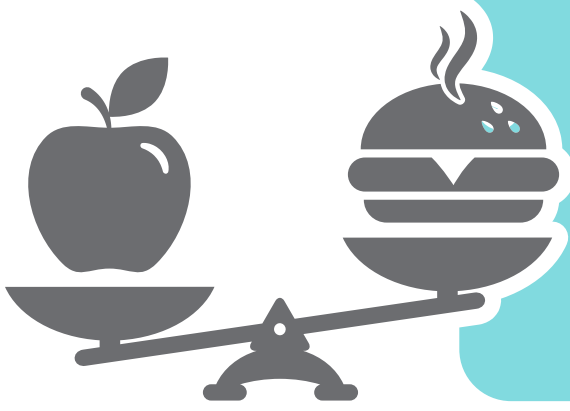
GREEN ZONE 😊	Take normal medication	■ No cough or wheeze ■ Can play games and sport normally ■ No sleep disturbance ■ Using reliever less than 3 times a week ■ Peak flow greater than 80%		Avoid these triggers:
	Medication:	How much:	When to take:	
	Preventer pump		Every day, even when I feel well	
	Reliever pump		Only if I need to, like when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm wheezing • my chest feels tight • I'm finding it hard to breathe • I'm coughing or ___ min before exercise 	
	Other asthma medication I take every day:			
YELLOW ZONE 😐	Follow new instructions & monitor progress	Any of these: ■ Cough, wheeze or tight chest ■ Can't perform my usual activities (e.g. at work, exercise) ■ Waking up with asthma symptoms ■ Using reliever more than 2 times a week ■ Peak flow between 60%-80%		Notes: - If not improved within 24 hours, make an emergency appointment to see a doctor. - Contact your doctor today and let them know you started taking steroids and get an appointment within 24 hours.
	Medication:	How much:	When to take:	
	Preventer pump		Continue taking your preventer pump like in the Green Zone.	
	Reliever pump	As needed, up to _____ puffs every 4 hours.	Until my symptoms have gone and my peak flow is back to normal.	
	Prednisolone (steroid) tablets		Immediately and again every morning for _____ days or until I am fully better.	
RED ZONE 😞	Call for medical help: asthma attack	Any of these: ■ Breathing is hard and fast ■ Can't walk, talk or feed easily ■ Severe shortness of breath ■ Reliever pump is not helping ■ Wheezing a lot, or very tight chest, or coughing a lot ■ Peak flow is below 60%		- Sit up straight - Try to keep calm - Call an ambulance or go to the doctor NOW , even if symptoms get better!
	Medication:	How much:	When to take:	
	Reliever pump	1 puff every minute up to 10 times. Use a spacer if you have one. If not better and ambulance taking longer than 15 minutes, repeat: 1 puff every minute up to 10 times.		

CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR AMBULANCE

Doctor's number: _____ Ambulance's number: _____



DESIGNER PLATES: HOW TO DISH UP HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS AND DELICIOUS DIABETIC MEALS



BALANCE IS KEY TO A HEALTHY DIET

- Moderation matters
- Incorporate all food groups
- Avoid excess of one food group
- Avoid simply 'counting calories'



6 TYPES OF NUTRIENTS WE NEED TO SURVIVE:



1. Proteins



3. Lipids (fats)



5. Minerals



2. Carbohydrates



4. Vitamins



6. Water



We need **proteins, carbohydrates and healthy fats** in large amounts. **Vitamins and minerals** are micronutrients we need in **small amounts**.

PLATING UP THE RIGHT WAY

PLATE 1: A BALANCED PLATE

Rule of thumb:

- One quarter of your plate = low-carb vegetables or salad
- One quarter = protein
- One quarter = carbohydrates
- Include a small portion of healthy fats (the size of your thumb).

DO

- Complex, unprocessed sources of carbohydrates like sweet potato, butternut or legumes.
- Choose lean sources of protein like eggs or skinless chicken.

DON'T

- Skip the vegetables/salad portion. This is vital to keep your carbs and protein in proportion.



PLATE 2: CARDIOVASCULAR PLATE

Rule of thumb:

- Half a plate = vegetables

DO

- Quarter plate high-fibre, non-refined carbs, like chickpeas and lentils.
- Quarter plate lean protein.
- Bulk up on veggies.
- Get in fatty fish like sardines and pilchards at least twice a week.
- Keep your portion of healthy fats to the size of a small dice.
- Drink water or herbal teas to stay hydrated.

DON'T

- Eat the fat on meat.
- Forget your fibre.
- Over-salt your food. Recommended daily allowance is 5 grams.
- Exceed 2 servings of dairy a day.
- Sip on sugar-sweetened beverages.



PLATE 3: DIABETES PLATE

Rule of thumb:

- The correct portion of high fibre, unprocessed carbohydrates is priority.

DO

- Minimise the intake of sugar alternatives.
- Spice up your diabetic diet with new and clever recipes.

DON'T

- Include low-carb vegetables, such as pumpkin, sweet potato or butternut in your vegetable portion. Include them as part of your carbohydrate portion.
- Overdo things by drinking litres of artificially sweetened carbonated drinks.
- Rely solely on 'diabetic' foods. In many cases diabetic sweets, chocolates or biscuits have a higher energy and fat content.





Less is more: consulting one doctor

You want to give your family the best medical care. So when it comes to serious health issues, it's smart to consult more than one specialist. With a general practitioner (GP) though, the more GPs you see, the greater the chance of miscommunication and overtreatment.

In fact, the phenomenon of consulting more than one doctor is called "doctor shopping". It can lead to dire consequences. A 2014 study by the *American Journal of Public Health* says that doctor shopping for prescription drugs has resulted in a sharp increase in drug overdoses.

Other common issues:

- **Medication problems:** Consulting more than one doctor means you may have a long and differing list of medications to keep track of. With one doctor, this process is streamlined.
- **Too many tests:** It's not uncommon for a doctor to reorder a test that another doctor has just had done. Moreover, even minor abnormalities or incidental findings can lead to increasingly invasive testing with a risk of serious complications.
- **Waste of time and money:** While genuine medical problems should never be ignored, overtreatment can drain your resources. Even with the best insurance plans, co-payments for office visits, tests, procedures and pharmacy bills can add up quickly.
- **Stress:** Undergoing frequent tests, waiting for results, and trying to make sense of conflicting opinions can cause unnecessary stress and tension.

Overtreatment can drain your resources – bills can add up quickly

Benefits of one family doctor

A single family doctor is able to follow your family's history and life cycle. He or she will be there from the time you're pregnant right through to your child's growth and development. This means you will have time and opportunity to build a strong bond with your doctor.

A strong and trusting bond with one doctor is necessary so you always feel secure in divulging any health conditions or problems. This includes mental health issues too, and your family doctor would be able to steer you in the right direction to get help.

It's also worth noting that family doctors can treat a wide variety of issues before you would need to consider a specialist. According to a study by the *Annals of Family Medicine and Stellenbosch University researchers*, family doctors in South Africa have made a significant contribution to healthcare by improving the quality. For example, conditions like TB, HIV and mental health are common in South Africa and family doctors provide quality medical help for those affected by these conditions who can't afford medical aid or expensive hospital fees. Family doctors are able to also treat injuries and help manage chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes and arthritis. When and if the need for specialist care arises, your family doctor, with his knowledge of your and your family's medical history, will be best placed to assist.

Tips

- Make a decision with yourself to be 100% upfront and honest at all times with your doctor. It does your health no good to keep sensitive or embarrassing information to yourself.
- Be mindful of your doctor's availability, stick to your appointments and if you need to cancel, do so as far in advance as possible.
- Get a reference from your current doctor for a 'back-up' in cases of emergency where your GP is unavailable.



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Chronic illness in children

Your child got your husband's nose and your big eyes – but could he also have inherited your asthma or allergies?

In the book, *Heading Home with Your Newborn*, author Jennifer Shu writes: "A combination of genetics and environmental influences trigger a condition. You can't change your kid's genes, but you can get familiar with a few of the most common health problems that affect families and learn how to protect yours."

Commonly inherited conditions

- A study in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* found that allergies can be gender-related, with mothers passing allergies to their daughters, and fathers more likely to pass allergies to their sons.
- Studies show that kids have a 50% risk of inheriting migraines.
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).
- Inherited high cholesterol, called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH).

Medical experts are also concerned about the increasing rise of obesity, asthma and diabetes in children. While genetics do play a role in obesity, so too do eating habits and lifestyle.

Healthy habits for good health

- Sugar and caffeinated drinks are terrible for children. Researchers at Yale University gave healthy children a sugary soft drink followed by a blood test. They found that their adrenaline levels were five times higher than normal for up to five hours afterwards, and those levels of irritability and anxiety increased in the children during the test period. As far as possible, keep soft drinks and sugary juices on the 'no' list.
- Give your child whole, nutritious food to eat. White bread, white rice and white pasta have their nutrients stripped out, so opt instead for wholemeal varieties, which are more filling and contain fibre for healthy digestion. Ensure that your child's diet includes fresh fruit and vegetables which provide essential vitamins and minerals.
- Avoid hydrogenated fats typically found in packaged foods with a long sell-by date. Your child however, does need good fats for their brain and nervous system development. These include Omega-6 and Omega-3 fatty acids. These can be found in oily fish, like salmon, mackerel or fresh tuna.
- Your child may benefit from a quality daily multivitamin for children.
- If you notice that your child reacts badly after eating certain foods, eliminate it from their diet for a few weeks and monitor their reaction. The most common foods that cause problems are wheat, gluten, dairy products and eggs.

Try to
keep soft drinks
and sugary
juices on the
'no' list

Get them moving

Children and teens should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week, preferably daily. Remember that children imitate adults. Start adding physical activity to your own daily routine and encourage your child to join you:

- Try brisk walking, skipping, playing soccer, swimming and dancing.
- Limit screen time (television, computer, video games) to less than two hours per day.
- Get them busy doing chores around the house, gardening and other household tasks.

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