

YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2021



“Every human being is the author of his own health or disease.”
- Buddha



Dear Member

If you suffer from a chronic condition, learning how to manage it is key to good health. But, you don't need to do it alone.

In this month's edition of Your Care, we share guidelines on **how to ask for help managing your chronic condition**. By reaching out for help, it won't be long before you make the necessary lifestyle changes to better support your health.

We also take a look at **talking to your children about mental health**, which is so important today with the prevalence of social media and the internet, and how to **eat for your immune system**.

Lastly, you can find out more **about using Prescribed Minimum Benefits or PMBs to better manage your diabetes**.

Remember to keep making those little changes every day that make a big difference to your health!

Happy reading!

Kind regards,
Polmed Your Care Support Team

In this issue...

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Growing up can be hard, especially in the age of social media. As informative as the Internet is, it may also be contributing to mental health conditions in our youth.

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EAT FOR YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

You are what you eat, and that applies to more than just managing your weight.

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USE PMBs TO BETTER MANAGE YOUR DIABETES

This infographic tells you more about using Prescribed Minimum Benefits to take care of your diabetes.

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HOW TO ASK FOR HELP MANAGING YOUR CHRONIC CONDITION

An infographic with tips on asking others for support which can make all the difference.

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Talk to your children about mental health



Growing up can be hard, especially in the age of social media. As informative as the Internet is, it may also be contributing to mental health conditions in our youth.

According to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG):

1. 17% of South African children and adolescents are living with mental health conditions.
2. 9% of all teen deaths in South Africa are due to suicide.
3. In the 15 to 24 age group, suicide is the second-leading – and fastest-growing – cause of death.

It's therefore important for parents and caregivers to be aware of their children's mental health, and to discuss this at home.



Is my child depressed?

According to the Western Cape government, 75% of individuals who commit or attempt suicide have given some warning. Below are some signs and symptoms:

- Behavioural problems at school
- Refusal to go to school or take part in social activities
- Fear of being away from a parent
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Lack of interest in fun activities
- Low energy levels or general fatigue
- Mood changes, such as irritability
- Acting out
- Self-harm
- Social isolation

While you may feel a little apprehensive at first, it's important to create an environment where your children will be comfortable to speak to you if they're struggling.



How to talk to a child

- Find a conversation-starter from everyday life – their favourite movie or a recent family incident.
- Use age-appropriate language. Avoid statistics and heavy words.
- Answer their questions directly and honestly.



How to talk to a teenager

Teenagers are more likely to discuss mental health with their peers, so you'll have to tread carefully and find ways to address any concerns they may have.

- Be open and honest.
- Don't lecture them.
- Don't use slang terms to try to be relatable.
- Don't trivialise or dismiss their feelings.
- Listen.

We've all experienced growing pains, but some children and teens have it tougher than others. That's why it's important to create a safe environment for discussions about mental health, so that children can begin their journey to recovery.

If you have any concerns about your child's behaviour that you can't manage, seek the advice of a professional.



You can also contact SADAG for assistance:

Suicide Crisis Helpline (24-hour helpline):
Tel: 0800 567 567

Mental Health Line (available 8am – 8pm; Monday to Sunday):
Tel: 011 234 4837

Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Line (24-hour helpline):
Tel: 0800 12 13 14
SMS: 32312

Polmed has a Mental Health Programme. For more information, contact the **Polmed Client Service Call Centre on 0860 765 633** and follow the prompts to the Mental Health Programme. Alternatively, send an email to Polpsych@medscheme.co.za.

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Eat for your immune system



You are what you eat, and that applies to more than just managing your weight.

With winter upon us, you'll want to give your immune system a boost. One of the most important ways of doing this is through the foods you eat.

These nutrients can help to give your immune system the support it needs:



Vitamin A

Helping to kill off bacteria, vitamin A can be found in beef and chicken liver, carrots, spinach, peaches and mangoes.



Vitamin C

'The food found to be highest in vitamin C is red pepper,' explains registered dietician Minette Schoombie. Other foods rich in vitamin C include oranges, kiwifruit, strawberries, broccoli and grapefruit.



Vitamin E

Vitamin E helps to fight off bacteria and viruses. Foods rich in vitamin E include seeds, nuts, spinach and broccoli.



Folate

Folate plays a crucial role in immune system health. You can find it in liver, spinach, eggs and beans.



Zinc

Higher zinc levels have also been found to reduce the risk for COVID-19 complications. Foods rich in zinc include oysters, beef, beans, cashew nuts, yoghurt and chickpeas.



Immune-boosting recipe

Cashew, baby marrow and basil soup

Courtesy of Minette Schoombie
Serves 8

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 medium onions
- 3 garlic cloves
- 6-8 baby marrow
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 90g raw cashew nuts
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups baby spinach

Method:

- Place olive oil, diced onion and garlic in a deep-base pan.
- Gently brown until glossy.
- Add diced baby marrow and leave to soften for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Add stock. Cover and leave to simmer for 10 minutes.
- Add cashews and fresh basil leaves, baby spinach, and blend with a hand-held blender or a fixed blender.
- Blend until smooth.
- Return to heat, season to taste and allow to simmer gently for another 5 minutes.



By making the right dietary decisions, you will help to boost your immune system and stay healthy this winter.

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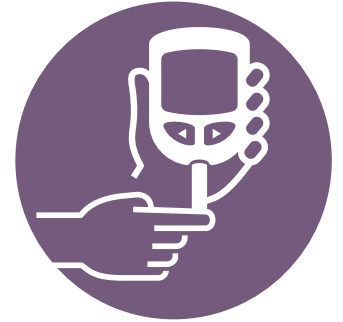
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- Minette Schoombie, Registered Dietician

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Use Prescribed Minimum Benefits to better manage your diabetes



Diabetes may affect millions of South Africans, but this doesn't mean the condition isn't manageable.

In addition to lifestyle changes, which include a change in diet and exercising more, there's also various services that can help those living with diabetes to better manage this condition.



WHAT ARE PRESCRIBED MINIMUM BENEFITS?

Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMBs) are a set of defined benefits stipulated by the Medical Schemes Act. The aim of PMBs is to provide minimum health services, including certain tests, to all members who need them, irrespective of the scheme they belong to.

PMBs cover many chronic conditions, including diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.



USING PMBs TO MANAGE DIABETES

It's important for members to register their diabetes diagnosis with Polmed in order to access the minimum appropriate treatment and care available to manage this condition.

Members will receive access to various tests and health services that will be listed in the Care Plan supplied by Polmed.

Email polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za for registration on the Polmed chronic management programme for diabetes.



Refer to your Member Guide for more information about your chronic benefits.

TESTS INCLUDE:

HbA1c test:

This test shows the long-term effectiveness of your diabetes treatment, and a high reading means a higher risk for diabetes-related complications.



Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR) test:

Unmanaged diabetes can lead to kidney damage. An eGFR test helps to measure and evaluate kidney function.



HEALTH SERVICES INCLUDE:

Doctor visits:

Your doctor is in charge of your treatment. If you have diabetes, it's important to honour your doctor visits as outlined in your care plan, as your doctor will perform a check-up and review your medication/treatment plan.



Foot exam:

Unmanaged diabetes can affect foot health, increasing the risk of ulcers and other complications. Your doctor may do the assessment themselves or refer you to a podiatrist. Alternatively, remember to schedule an appointment to visit a podiatrist at least once a year.



With the appropriate treatment and care, you can manage diabetes. By registering your diagnosis with your Scheme, you will gain access to valuable benefits.

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How to ask for help managing your chronic condition



Being diagnosed with a chronic condition can be a shock to the system. It may take some time to accept, but managing a chronic condition is the best way to protect your health.

One of the key methods for doing this is through lifestyle changes. Adopting and sticking to lifestyle changes, however, can be difficult. That's why you may want to turn to those closest to you, to help you.



ASKING FOR HELP

No one wants to admit they need help, especially when it comes to their health. But asking for help from family and friends doesn't make you weak. In fact, it shows confidence and dedication to making meaningful changes.

If you're not sure how to ask for help, keep the following in mind:

- Remember that you have no reason to feel embarrassed.
- Be open and honest – don't make your family and friends guess.
- Be specific about what you need.



HOW CAN LOVED ONES HELP YOU?

Below are a few examples of how family and friends can help you to make the necessary lifestyle changes:

- Making plans to do **physical activities together** e.g. joining online exercise classes together.
- Taking **exercise** outside – weather dependent, encourage them to take regular walks or a hike with you.
- Planning **healthy meals** together.
- Putting out **healthy snacks**, such as nuts, fruits and seeds.
- Adding **healthy side-dishes** during meals.
- Ensuring **healthy beverage options**, such as water, sparkling water, green tea or freshly-pressed vegetable juice, are served instead of only high-in-sugar fruit juice and cool drinks.
- **Limiting smoking and alcohol** consumption during social gatherings that you attend.



If you've been diagnosed with a chronic condition, you don't need to manage it alone. By reaching out for help, it won't be long before you make the necessary lifestyle changes to better support your health.

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