

# YOUR CARE POLMED

February 2022

“Those who do not  
find time for  
exercise will have to  
find time for illness.”

- Edward Smith-Stanley



Dear Member

As we enjoy the last summer month in South Africa, did you know that skin cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the world? While a little sun is good for you, it's important to protect your skin for the sake of your health. Our infographic tells you how to check your skin for any changes, and we share a few top sun protection tips.

You can also find out how to exercise without an expensive fitness device, as well as the five basics of diabetes care – simple, but important steps.

**Have a healthy February and do take care of your health!**

Kind regards,  
**Polmed Your Care Support Team**

## In this issue...

### SOAK IN THE SUN SAFELY

A little sun is good for you, but for the sake of your health, ensure that you enjoy it safely.

> [READ MORE...](#)

### EQUIPMENT FREE EXERCISE FOR BETTER HEALTH

Regular exercise can help to boost your longevity and manage chronic conditions. You don't need a pricey device to do this – just follow our guidance to exercise device-free!

> [READ MORE...](#)

### THE FIVE BASICS OF DIABETES CARE

While 4,5 million South Africans are living with diabetes, it's important to remember that diabetes is a manageable condition when you follow a few basic, yet important guidelines.

> [READ MORE...](#)

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**STAY  
SAFE**

**PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA**

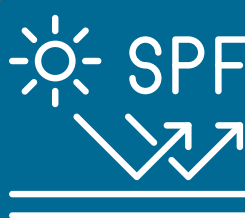
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## Soak in the sun safely



## Skin cancer is the fifth most common cancer in the world.



Over 400 deaths per year  
Over 4 000 cancer cases every year

### WHO IS AT RISK?

**Anyone can get skin cancer.** Even individuals with darker skin, which is rich in melanin, a natural pigment that absorbs harmful UV rays, are still at risk. In fact, reggae legend Bob Marley died of skin cancer.

### WHO IS AT A HIGHER RISK?

**Individuals at a higher risk are those with:**

- fairer skin
- blue or green eyes
- blonde or red hair
- a personal or family history of skin cancer
- moles and skin spots



### MARKS AND MOLES

The **ABCD rule** can help guide you when checking your skin.

If you notice any of the following changes, see your doctor or a dermatologist immediately to determine the cause:

**A: asymmetry** – moles with asymmetrical halves

**B: border irregularities** – a mole with poorly defined edges

**C: colour variations and inconsistency** – tan, brown, black, red, white and blue moles

**D: diameter** – a mole that is larger than 6 mm

### SUN PROTECTION

With over 90% of skin cancer cases caused by the sun, the best way to protect your skin – and your health – is through sun protection.

**Here are our top sun protection tips:**

1. Always wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Broad-spectrum sunscreens help to protect against both UVA rays (cause of premature ageing and pigmentation) and UVB rays (responsible for sunburn and skin cancer).



2. Wear sun-protective clothing, such as long-sleeved shirts, pants, sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats.



3. Wear good-quality sunglasses with a UV400 rating.



4. Avoid the sun between 10:00 and 15:00.



5. Stay away from tanning beds.



6. Check your skin regularly for any unusual marks or changes to moles, freckles and birthmarks.

**A little sun is good for you, but for the sake of your health, ensure that you enjoy it safely.**

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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](mailto:polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za) with your membership number and contact details.

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## The five basics of diabetes care



**Just over 4,5 million South Africans are living with diabetes.**

While this is a high number, it's important to remember that diabetes is a manageable condition when you follow a few basic, yet important guidelines.

### 1 Regular tests

These tests will help to monitor your condition:

**HbA1c test:**

- Monitors glucose levels
- Done at least twice a year
- Healthy HbA1c reading: 7% (a reading between 7% and 8.5% may be acceptable)

**Serum creatinine test:**

- Measures kidney function since diabetes can affect kidneys
- Should be done at least once a year
- Healthy serum creatinine levels: 60 to 110µmol/L for men and 45 to 90µmol/L for women



### 2 Manage your diet

Food and beverages that help to stabilise blood sugar levels are important.

**Include:**

- Green leafy vegetables and fruits (in moderation)
- Whole-grains, legumes, nuts and fatty fish

**Avoid:**

- Processed foods
- Sweets
- Alcohol
- Fruit juices and fizzy drinks



### 3 Take care of your body

Around 50% of people with diabetes have nerve damage due to high glucose levels. Nerve damage can affect wound healing as well as your feet and eyes.

- Monitor your feet regularly, especially if a wound is not healing. Visit a podiatrist to ensure your feet remain healthy.
- Regular eye tests are also essential.



### 4 Monitor your medication usage

Medication helps to manage insulin levels. Set a reminder on your phone or add a note in your diary to take your medication as prescribed by your doctor and renew your prescription.



### 5 Emergency care

A diabetic emergency can happen at any time. It's important that your loved ones know what to do in an emergency, including testing your blood sugar levels.

A diabetic emergency can be:

- hypoglycaemic (as a result of low blood sugar) or
- hyperglycaemic (as a result of high blood sugar)

It's important to know how to manage each situation. The first step is to test the person's blood sugar level to determine if it's a hypo- or hyperglycaemic emergency.

Remember: Healthy blood sugar levels for those with diabetes are between 4 and 7 mmol/L before a meal and up to 10 mmol/L for about two hours after a meal.

**In a hypoglycaemic diabetic emergency (low blood sugar level reading):**

- Give something sweet to eat or drink to raise their blood sugar, such as a teaspoon of honey or some sweet juice.
- Test their blood sugar levels again.
- If there is no improvement, give them another sweet, wait a few minutes, and test again.
- If the test still shows no improvement, seek medical advice immediately.

**In a hyperglycaemic diabetic emergency (high blood sugar level reading):**

If their blood sugar level is too high, seek medical advice immediately.

Diabetes is a manageable condition and by taking the correct steps, you can help to effectively manage it and enjoy a good quality of life.



**Note: Patients with pre-existing conditions may have different target ranges for the abovementioned measures based on clinical guidelines.**

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## Equipment free exercise for better health

### Regular exercise can help to boost your longevity and manage chronic conditions.



You need to exercise efficiently though in order to get the most benefit, which you can ensure by monitoring your exercise intensity. You don't need a pricey device to do this – just follow our guidance to exercise device-free!

### WHAT IS EXERCISE INTENSITY?

Exercise intensity is how much energy is spent during the workout. There are three levels of exercise intensity:

#### 1. Low-intensity Exercise

- These workouts are slow-paced and mildly raise your heart rate.
- Strolling, light jogging and stretching are good examples.
- Try to do this at least once a week for 30 minutes.



#### 2. Moderate-intensity Exercise

- These exercises raise your heart rate and help you to burn off more energy.
- Hiking, dancing and power-walking are moderate-intensity exercises.
- If your aim is to exercise at a moderate-intensity level, try to do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise a week (30 minutes, 5 days a week).



#### 3. Vigorous-intensity Exercise

- These use the most energy, which raises your heart rate and burns more calories.
- Running, playing a sport and swimming are vigorous-intensity exercises.
- If vigorous-intensity exercise is your goal, aim to exercise for 75 minutes a week (25 minutes, 3 days a week).



### MEASURING EXERCISE INTENSITY

Heart rate is used to measure exercise intensity. While your heart rate is often measured using fitness devices, this is not the only way to do it. Using the talk test is also effective in measuring exercise intensity.

#### THE TALK TEST

**Low intensity:** If you're exercising and you can still talk normally.

**Moderate intensity:** If your breathing is getting heavier and you can still talk, but not sing.

**Vigorous intensity:** If you're breathing harder and faster and you can talk only in short sentences without stopping your exercise.

**Note:** Consult your doctor before starting a new exercise programme.

**Regular exercise, whatever the intensity, is good for your health. Do your best though to break a sweat – your health will thank you.**

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