

YOUR CARE POLMED

March 2022



“Let’s build wellness
rather than treating
disease.”

- Bruce Daggy



Dear Member

In 2022, when we talk vaccines, we mostly think of the COVID-19 vaccine. However, it’s important not to forget about the others, particularly the flu vaccine. This month, we look into why it is still important that you get the **flu vaccine** along with the other important vaccinations.

We also take a look at how you can **ease those lonely feelings** as well as diabetes care for **kidney health**.

Here’s to a partnership that brings about better health and wellness!

Kind regards,
Polmed Your Care Support Team

In this issue...

YES, THE FLU VACCINE IS STILL IMPORTANT

In 2022, when we talk vaccines, we mostly think of COVID-19. But it’s important not to forget about the others, particularly the flu vaccine, and to get the facts, so that we can protect our health.

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DIABETES CARE FOR KIDNEY HEALTH

It’s estimated that, currently, around 4.5 million South Africans are living with diabetes. And while it’s a manageable condition, if it’s poorly managed, around 40% of them will go on to develop chronic kidney disease.

> [READ MORE...](#)

EASE THOSE LONELY FEELINGS

Statistics suggest that South Africa is the 8th-loneliest country in the world, with around 40% of the population experiencing loneliness.

> [READ MORE...](#)

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*Please use the latest browser to view the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS).



**KIDS OVER 12+ YEARS OLD CAN NOW
BE REGISTERED FOR VACCINATION.**

<https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/#/>

COVID-19 Public Hotline: 0800 029 999
WhatsApp Support Line: 0600-123456

COVID-19
Online Resource & News Portal
[SAacoronavirus.co.za](https://saacoronavirus.co.za)



**STAY
SAFE**

PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA

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POLMED
OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

Yes, the flu vaccine
is still important



**In 2022, when we talk vaccines, we mostly think of COVID-19.
But it's important not to forget about the others, particularly the flu vaccine,
and to get the facts, so that we can protect our health.**



Why do I need the flu vaccine?

According to medical practitioner Dr Theana Boshoff, around 19% of South Africans are affected by the flu every year. In addition, severe illness caused by the flu affects 45 000 South Africans annually, and almost 50% of these individuals require hospitalisation. The flu also causes about 6 000 to 11 000 deaths every year.

Getting vaccinated is the best and the first line of defence against the flu.



Does the flu vaccine work?

The flu vaccine helps strengthen the immune system, reduces the severity of the disease for those who fall ill but are vaccinated, and shortens the duration of the illness. The vaccine has been found to reduce the risk of intensive care unit (ICU) admissions by 26% and death by 31%.



Does the flu vaccine have side-effects?

Common side-effects of the flu vaccine include soreness, and redness and/or swelling around the injection site. You may also experience headaches, nausea and muscle aches.



Why do I need to have both the COVID and flu vaccine?

While there are some similarities, COVID-19 and the flu are caused by two different viruses, and therefore require two different vaccines.



Can I get both vaccines at the same time?

Yes, the COVID-19 and flu vaccines can be co-administered.

Vaccinations are a vital tool for fighting disease. They protect not only your own health, but also that of those around you.

Disclaimer: Information herein true at date of publication: March 2022.

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- Dr Theana Boshoff, medical practitioner

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.

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Diabetes care for kidney health

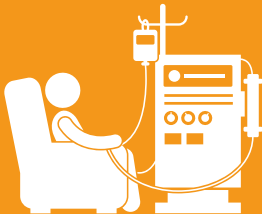


It's estimated that, currently, around **4.5 million South Africans** are living with diabetes.



And while it's a manageable condition, if it's poorly managed, around **40%** of them will go on to develop **chronic kidney disease**.

One of the functions of the kidneys is to remove waste from the body, but unmanaged diabetes can cause damage to blood vessels and nerves, which can result in poor kidney function. This may necessitate dialysis, a treatment that removes waste from the body when the kidneys are no longer functioning properly.



WHY DO I FEEL LONELY?

Diabetes can affect the health of your kidneys, and there are a few tests that can help evaluate their health. The eGFR test, for example, measures kidney function and determines which stage of kidney disease one is in. Another important test is the serum creatinine test.

Individuals with diabetes should go for an annual serum creatinine test.

This is a blood test, with the sample sent to the laboratory for analysis. The test will indicate how well the kidneys are functioning, and reveal signs of any kidney damage.

Before the test, make sure to disclose to your doctor any medications you're taking, as these can alter creatinine levels.



HEALTHY Serum creatine

60 – 110µmol/L



HEALTHY Serum creatine

45 – 90µmol/L

Diabetes can affect many areas of the body, with the kidneys being one of them. Luckily, with proper care, you can protect the health of your body, including your kidneys.

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

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Ease those lonley feelings

Statistics suggest that **South Africa is the 8th-loneliest country in the world**, with around **40% of the population experiencing loneliness**.



But while we all feel lonely once in a while, the more we experience loneliness, the more it can affect our mental health.



WHY DO I FEEL LONELY?

Factors that contribute to loneliness include:

- Physical isolation (COVID-19 brought about high levels of loneliness among young South Africans)
- Trauma
- Poor personal relationships
- Fixation with perfection

It's possible to feel lonely even when you're not "alone", especially in the age of social media. This may relate more to the quality of your relationships than the number of people around you.



HOW TO MANAGE LONELY FEELINGS

1. STRENGTHEN YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS

Reaching out to a friend or family member will help you to feel less lonely, and it can also give you a chance to share your feelings. If a face-to-face conversation feels too daunting, communicate over the phone.



2. FIND YOUR TRIBE

Finding a group of people with common interests is a great way to make more quality connections. A book club, a dance class or even a Facebook group that shares your favourite recipes are good examples.



3. REACH OUT FOR HELP

Feelings of loneliness may also be a symptom of a mental health condition, such as depression. If your feelings of loneliness persist, consult a doctor for a clearer diagnosis.



Humans are social creatures, but loneliness can make us feel isolated and disconnected. **Remember that you are not alone – there is always help available.**

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