

YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2022



“Go easy on yourself.
Whatever you do today,
let it be enough.”

- Anonymous



Dear Member

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many health issues to the fore, and anxiety-related disorders form part of this. The World Health Organization estimates a 25% global increase in cases of depression and anxiety following the pandemic.

This month, we share an article with some valuable tips to help you **manage your anxiety**.

Since the middle of the year is also a good time to reflect on where you're at in terms of your health goals, our infographic on **mid-year health check-ups** should be helpful too.

Finally, take a look at desk stretches you can do at work or at home to relieve **backaches**.

Stay healthy and active this June.

Polmed Your Care Team

In this issue...

MANAGING ANXIETY

It's normal to feel anxious and stressed now and then. However, when those feelings of anxiety worsen over time and begin to affect your quality of life for more than half the week for six months or longer, you may be living with an anxiety disorder.

> [READ MORE...](#)

MID-YEAR HEALTH CHECK-UP REMINDER

Getting regular check-ups for your diabetes and/or hypertension will help you manage these chronic conditions so they don't become a serious threat to your life.

> [READ MORE...](#)

DESK STRETCHES FOR BACKACHES

With almost 1 in 5 South African adults struggling with chronic back pain, sitting at your desk all day can worsen the issue. Back pain can also decrease work productivity, so managing it can be better for your health and your job.

> [READ MORE...](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY: This email contains confidential information. The information on this email and attachments thereto (if any) is only for the use of the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying and/or distribution of the content of this email to any person other than the sender (as specified in the email), or the taking of any action thereon, is strictly prohibited. Interception of this email is also prohibited. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender (as specified in the email) using the contact details contained in such e-mail and delete this email and any attachments thereto, once you have notified the sender.

*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
SAcoronavirus.co.za



**STAY
SAFE**

PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA

YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2022



POLMED
OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

Managing anxiety



Mental health conditions are quite common in South Africa, with anxiety-related disorders being the most common ones.

And according to the World Health Organization, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a

25% GLOBAL INCREASE

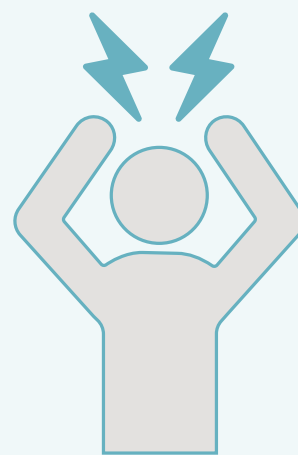
in cases of depression and anxiety.

AM I TOO ANXIOUS?

It's normal to feel anxious and stressed now and then. However, when those feelings of anxiety worsen over time and begin to affect your quality of life for more than half the week for six months or longer, you may be living with an anxiety disorder.

Symptoms of an anxiety disorder can include:

- Excessive and uncontrollable feelings of worry and restlessness
- Fear of impending danger
- Increased heart rate
- Rapid breathing
- Fatigue
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Agitation
- Trouble concentrating and sleeping
- Stomach problems
- Avoidance of people or situations



HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY

If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety, try some of the following steps to learn how to manage anxiety:

1. OPEN UP

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's estimated that only 15% of South Africans with mental health conditions had received treatment.

Opening up can help to combat the stigma attached to mental health-related challenges. Perhaps start a conversation with, "I've been struggling a bit. Do you mind taking a walk with me?"

If you notice that a loved one is under strain, find a way to initiate a conversation about it. Ask them out for a walk or to join you for a cup of tea and then suggest something like this: "I've noticed that you've been a little down. Is everything okay?"

2. ADOPT GOOD LIFESTYLE HABITS

These habits can help you or your loved ones to manage anxiety symptoms:

- Exercising
- Practising mindfulness
- Avoiding sugary foods and alcohol
- Reducing social media use
- Spending time in nature
- Practising self-care (get a massage, read a book, spend time in the local market)

Mental health conditions can take a toll on you and those around you. If feelings of anxiety have become overwhelming, reach out to your doctor to receive the necessary care and support.

POLMED HAS A MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

This programme aims to improve your quality of life and empowers you to manage your condition more effectively. Once you've enrolled on the programme, a dedicated Mental Health Case Manager will be assigned to assist you and collaborate with your treating doctor to ensure that you get the support you need.

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

References:

- https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Sci_Brief-Mental_health-2022.1
- <https://sajp.org.za/index.php/sajp/article/view/1138/1035>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anxiety/symptoms-causes/syc-20350961>
- <https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/opinion/2021/2021-10/untreated-mental-illnesses-impact-sas-economy-social-and-family-stability.html>
- <https://lifecounselinginstitute.com/10-daily-habits-that-can-reduce-your-anxiety/>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/mindful-anger/201903/6-signs-it-s-time-look-for-help-your-anxiety>

Published: June 2022

YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2022



Mid-year health check-up reminder



11.3% of South Africans are currently living with diabetes



48%



45%



OLDER THAN 15 YEARS
in South Africa have hypertension

If left unmanaged, both of these conditions can cause serious health complications.

REGULAR CHECK-UPS

One way to help manage these chronic conditions is through regular check-ups with your doctor and other specialists. The frequency is based on their recommendation as well as the tests and checks covered as part of your care plan. Your doctor and other specialists will evaluate how well you're managing each condition and answer any questions you have about these conditions.



What is a Care Plan?

A Care Plan is a list of the services that Polmed will cover. It details the care you have access to in order to manage your condition.

What if I need more treatment than is listed in my Care Plan?

If you need treatment and care in excess of your Care Plan, a clinical motivation needs to be provided and approved before more services will be covered.

Do I need to do anything?

A Care Plan has automatically been put in place for you. Please make sure that every claim you send to Polmed has an ICD-10 code reflected on it so that it can be identified on the system and paid from the correct benefit limit.

It is important to note that this treatment plan is based on the specified diagnosis and will not be additional to that plan. This means you will be authorised for the maximum of the highest number of treatments in the Care Plan.

For more information or to submit a motivation, please contact the Polmed Client Service Call Centre on **0860 765 633** or send an email to **polmedapmb@medscheme.co.za**

DIABETES CHECKLIST



HbA1c test

This test provides an average reading of blood glucose levels over the past three months.



Foot exam

Unmanaged diabetes can lead to nerve damage (peripheral neuropathy), which can cause foot infections, sores and cracks, and may lead to amputations.

Around 46% of people living with diabetes in Africa deal with diabetic peripheral neuropathy.

A podiatrist (foot doctor) assesses your feet to determine if you need any treatment.



Eye test

Unmanaged diabetes can cause damage to the eye's blood vessels (diabetic retinopathy).

Around 11% of South Africans with diabetes experience diabetic retinopathy.

An eye test is performed to assess the state of your eyes.



Blood pressure check

Diabetes can raise your blood pressure and high blood pressure can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.



Lipogram test

People with diabetes may experience high levels of LDL cholesterol, which can increase the risk for heart disease or a stroke.

A lipogram test measures cholesterol levels.



Serum creatinine test

Diabetes can affect kidney function, leading to kidney damage. A serum creatinine test is used to assess kidney function.

HYPERTENSION CHECKLIST



Blood pressure check

Those with high blood pressure need to monitor their blood pressure level, as this reveals how well they're managing this condition.



Serum creatinine test

Hypertension is a leading cause of kidney damage. A serum creatinine test assesses kidney function.



Lipogram test

People with hypertension have an increased risk of developing heart disease. Elevated blood cholesterol levels further increase this risk, therefore it is important to have a lipogram test done annually.



Blood glucose test

Blood glucose levels can affect blood pressure, which can then cause health complications for those with hypertension. Therefore, it's important to monitor blood glucose levels.



A check-up is also the perfect time to discuss any other matters with your healthcare provider. You can check if your prescriptions are up to date and ask about side effects you may experience from your medication or symptoms related to your condition that concern you. You can even get a refresher course on administering insulin or taking your blood glucose using a glucometer.

Should your chronic treatment be reviewed or changed, please send us your chronic medicine prescription so that we can register your new medication or update your existing authorisations.

How to register?

To access the chronic medication benefit, your doctor or pharmacist needs to call the provider number on **0860 104 111** to join the Polmed Chronic Medicine Management Programme. Alternatively, you can call the Polmed Client Service Call Centre on **0860 765 633**. Please make sure that you have the following information on hand when you call:

- Your member details (including membership number and date of birth).
- A copy of a valid chronic prescription (including the applicable ICD-10 code, doctor's practice number/details and medication details).

NOTE: Your doctor can then email your prescription to: **polmedcmm@medscheme.co.za**

Need more information about chronic medication authorisation?

Go to the Polmed website: **www.polmed.co.za** and click *Members > Managed Care > Chronic Medicine Management* for more details about this Programme and our disease authorisation process.

References:

- <https://idf.org/our-network/regions-members/africa/members/25-south-africa.html>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590113321000171>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/atoz-hba1c-test/>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/atoz-nerve-disease/>
- <https://bmcendocrdisord.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12902-020-0534-5>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/diabetes-and-the-eyes-prevention-is-better-than-cure/>
- <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/22/12209>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/diabetes-and-heart.html>
- <https://mybloodtest.co.za/bundles/lipogram-bundle>
- <https://www.ndtv.com/health/hypertension-how-often-should-you-check-your-blood-pressure-numbers-heres-a-complete-guide-2369402>
- <https://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/guide/hypertension-related-kidney-disease>
- <https://www.endocrineweb.com/conditions/diabetes/can-blood-sugar-affect-blood-pressure>

Published: June 2022

YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2022



POLMED
OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

Desk stretches for backaches



The average person can spend around

4 HOURS SITTING AT THEIR
DESK EVERY DAY.

Sitting at your desk for too long can cause issues, such as back pain.



With almost

1 IN 5 SOUTH AFRICAN ADULTS

struggling with chronic pain, sitting at your desk all day can worsen the issue.

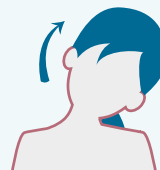


Back pain can also decrease work productivity, so managing it can be better for your health and your job.

NECK STRETCHES

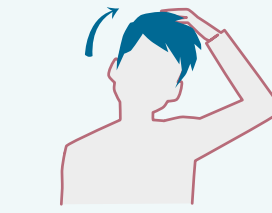
1. NECK TILT

- Sit up straight with your shoulders down and back, away from your ears.
- Slowly tilt your head and bring your right ear toward your right shoulder and feel the stretch on the left side of your neck. If you can, deepen the stretch by rolling your left shoulder down away from your left ear.
- Hold the pose for 10 - 15 seconds.
- Bring your head back to the centre and then repeat the stretch on the left side.
- Alternate once on each side.



2. CHIN STRETCH

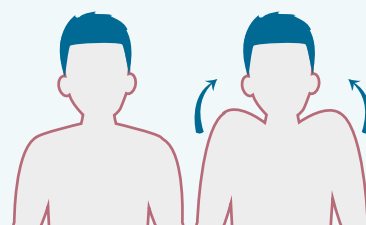
- Sit up straight and point your chin towards your right shoulder and then tilt your chin slightly down.
- Gently place your right hand on the left side of your head, slowly pull your chin closer to your shoulder and feel the stretch on the left side and back of your neck.
- Hold the stretch for 5 - 10 seconds and then repeat on the other side.
- Do this three times in each direction.



SHOULDER STRETCHES

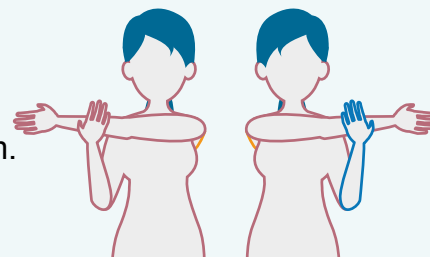
1. SHOULDER SHRUG

- Take a deep breath in and lift your shoulders up to your ears.
- While you exhale, roll your shoulders back and lift your chest.
- Repeat this 10 times.



2. SHOULDER STRETCH

- Hold one arm across your body.
- Pull your elbow into your chest and feel a gentle stretch.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds and repeat with the opposite arm.
- Repeat this on each side 3 - 5 times.



Note: Remember to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise programme.

These desk stretches are easy and can help you manage aches and pains in your back.

You can also reduce the risk for back pain by standing up from your desk every 30 - 45 minutes. Use this time for some of these stretches, take a walk outside or grab a glass of water.

If back pain starts to affect your day-to-day life, however, it's important to consult your doctor so you can understand and better manage your pain.

POLMED HAS A CONSERVATIVE BACK AND NECK PROGRAMME.

How will this treatment be funded?

Polmed covers the full cost of the Programme for qualifying members from the overall in-hospital benefit at Polmed rates and not from your out-of-hospital (day-to-day) benefits. Please note, however, that the Programme does not cover the cost of any X-rays, scans or prescribed medication.

To find out more about the programme and enrolment process or if you have any questions, you may call Polmed on **0860 765 633** (follow the voice prompts to the Disease Management Programme between 08:30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday), or send an email to **polmedcbrnp@medscheme.co.za**

References

- <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-020-01008-4>
- <https://www.capetownetc.com/news/south-africans-work-longer-hours-than-most-globally/>
- https://journals.lww.com/pain/Abstract/2020/07000/Almost_1_in_5_South_African_adults_have_chronic.19.aspx
- <https://safpj.co.za/index.php/safpj/article/view/4897/5798>
- <https://drspine.com/4-neck-stretches-to-do-at-your-desk-preventing-headaches-and-neck-pain/>
- <https://www.verywellfit.com/best-stretches-for-office-workers-1231153>
- <https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/desk-stretches>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/deskercise>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/shoulder-pain-exercises>
- <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/office/stretching.html>
- <https://www.autonomous.ai/ourblog/how-often-should-you-get-up-from-your-desk>

Published: June 2022