

# YOUR CARE POLMED

March 2023



“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.”

Jim Rohn



Dear Member

It’s a shocking estimate: 11 million women and 5 million men in South Africa will be obese by 2030. But carrying excess weight is about more than ‘looks’... it can really have a serious impact on your health. This month, we share an infographic that highlights how obesity increases your risk for developing various conditions, from hypertension to musculoskeletal disorders such as osteoarthritis.

We also take a look at the relationships in our lives and whether they are good for our mental health, and examine the importance of monitoring kidney function.

**Have a healthy, active and happy month ahead!**

POLMED Your Care Team

## In this issue...

### IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

Research suggests that individuals with a strong social circle are more likely to be happier, and those in healthy and stable relationships experience lower stress and less depression.

[READ MORE...](#)

### MONITORING KIDNEY FUNCTION

Your kidneys are one of the most important organs in your body, as they’re responsible for the removal of waste products. Could you be at risk for chronic kidney disease?

[READ MORE...](#)

### OBESITY IS A BIG PROBLEM

Current statistics suggest that 23% of South Africans are overweight, and 27% are obese. And these figures are expected to climb.

[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  
[SAcoronavirus.co.za](http://SAcoronavirus.co.za)



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**STAY SAFE**

PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA

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## Is your relationship good for your mental health?



The connections we have with those around us – our friends, family and partners – can add enormous value to our life. Unfortunately, not all relationships do, and some can even be detrimental to our mental health.



Research suggests that individuals with a strong social circle are more likely to be happier, and those in healthy and stable relationships experience lower stress and less depression. Toxic relationships, on the other hand, can increase the risk for depression, anxiety and heart disease.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP?



Poor communication



Lack of support



Controlling behaviour



Disrespect



Feelings of anxiety



Feeling drained in the partner's company



Lack of reciprocity – no give and take



Isolation from others because of the one relationship

### MAKING CHANGES

Financial and personal challenges can put a strain on relationships – but they don't excuse a toxic one. If the relationship is impacting negatively on you, changes need to be made.

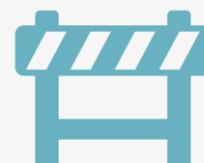
#### 1. TALK ABOUT IT

If someone's behaviour has gone unquestioned for some time, they may not realise that there is a problem. Let them know how their words and actions are affecting you.



#### 2. SET BOUNDARIES

By doing so, you let the person know where your limits are and how you'd like them to engage with you.



#### 3. LEAVE AND MOVE ON

If you've had the conversation and set boundaries, and nothing changes, you may need to remove yourself from their circle. This may be complicated, especially if they're family, but may be necessary in order to protect yourself.



Relationships are important to our quality of life. But no relationship is more important than the one we have with our mental health.

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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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## Monitoring Kidney Function



Your kidneys are one of the most important organs in your body, as they're responsible for the removal of waste products.



**± 5 million South Africans** over the age of 20 may be affected by chronic kidney disease.

### ARE MY KIDNEYS AT RISK?

The following may affect the health of your kidneys:

#### 1. Chronic conditions



##### OBESITY:

**23%** of South Africans are overweight



**27%** are obese



Excess weight puts strain on the kidneys, increasing the risk of kidney damage.



##### DIABETES:

Of the 4 million South Africans currently living with diabetes,

**40%** are expected to develop chronic kidney disease.



##### HYPERTENSION:

High blood pressure reduces blood flow to the kidneys, affecting kidney function. In sub-Saharan Africa,

**17.8%** of patients with hypertension will likely develop chronic kidney disease.



##### HIV/AIDS:

**8.5 MILLION** South Africans are living with HIV/AIDS

which can have an impact on kidney function.

#### 2. Smoking



**11 million** South Africans are smokers.

Smoking affects blood flow to the kidneys, which can cause kidney damage.

#### 3. Family history



You are more likely to develop chronic kidney disease if a parent, grandparent or sibling has been diagnosed with it.

### TESTING KIDNEY FUNCTION

While other tests may be required, the following are some of the tests used to evaluate kidney function:



Quick, simple and cheap, a **urine dipstick test** analyses your urine for kidney infection or disease.

A **serum creatinine test** measures how well the kidneys are filtering toxins from the blood.



**HEALTHY** serum creatinine **60 – 110µmol/L**



**HEALTHY** serum creatinine **45 – 90µmol/L**

An **eGFR test** measures kidney function.



**HEALTHY** eGFR **60 or more**

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

**Kidneys play a vital role in the body. It's important to stay on top of your health by regularly monitoring your kidney function with your doctor.**

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## Obesity is a big problem



Current statistics suggest that

**23%** of South Africans are overweight



**27%** are obese



And these figures are expected to climb. It's estimated that around

**11 MILLION**



**5 MILLION**

will be obese by **2030**.

**Obesity costs South Africa's healthcare system around R33 billion a year, by increasing the risk for the following conditions:**



### HYPERTENSION

- Excess fat can trigger changes in the body that increase blood pressure.
- Over 40% of South Africans are living with hypertension.
- Worldwide, obesity is responsible for 65% to 78% of cases of primary hypertension.



### DIABETES

- Obesity can trigger insulin resistance, which raises the risk of Type 2 diabetes.
- 11.3% of South Africans are living with Type 2 diabetes.
- Excess body weight has been linked to 87% of cases of Type 2 diabetes in South Africa.



### HYPERLIPIDAEMIA

- Obesity influences the body's management of cholesterol, which leads to hyperlipidaemia (high cholesterol).
- Hyperlipidaemia can increase the risk for heart attack and stroke – responsible for 1 in 6 deaths in South Africa.



### MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

- Excess weight places strain on joints and muscles.
- Obese and overweight individuals are 3 times more likely to develop osteoarthritis – a musculoskeletal disorder that impacts on joint health.
- Musculoskeletal disorders affect mobility, hindering one's ability to work and function in society.



### CANCERS

- Excess weight can trigger changes in the body that can cause the formation of cancer cells.
- According to the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), obesity can increase the risk for the following cancers:



Bowel



Breast



Gallbladder



Prostate



Kidney



Liver



Oesophageal



Ovarian



Pancreatic



Uterine

POLMED has a Weight Management Programme. The aim of the programme is to help getting you started on your weight loss journey.

### 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. How can we help?

Should you require assistance, information or 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 [polmedwmp@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmedwmp@medscheme.co.za)

**Carrying excess weight goes beyond aesthetics – it can have a significant impact on your health. To help manage your weight and protect your health, follow a diet that includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains, exercise regularly, and manage your stress levels.**

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