

YOUR CARE POLMED

April 2023



“The first wealth is health.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



Dear Member

Loadshedding. Cost of living crisis. It's no wonder our mental health stats in South Africa are somewhat dismal. Dealing with mental health challenges takes more than just having a positive attitude – sometimes you need a little help. This month we're looking at ways that you can deal with failure, and how starting over can be a wonderful thing.

We also share infographics that shine a light on pre-diabetes and mammograms. Learn how acting early can prevent pre-diabetes from turning into type 2 diabetes as well as the risk factors you should avoid. We'll unpack why mammograms are a vital tool in early cancer detection that keeps women living long, healthy lives.

Have a healthy, active and happy month ahead!

POLMED Your Care Team

In this issue...

STARTING OVER IS THE ANSWER TO FAILURE

A sense of failure can be overwhelming. But the experience doesn't mean the race is over.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

PRE-DIABETES: PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!

Pre-diabetes, if left untreated, can quickly develop into type 2 diabetes. But there are things that you can do to prevent this.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE A MAMMOGRAM?

With 1 in 27 women in South Africa at risk of developing breast cancer, it's the most diagnosed cancer for women in the country. But early detection can save lives.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

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**FIGHT FOR
WHAT'S RIGHT**

**STAND UP AGAINST
FRAUD + WASTE + ABUSE
IT AFFECTS US ALL**



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Starting over is the answer to failure



South Africa is listed as having the

third-highest suicide rate on the continent.

It's a sombre statistic that suggests many are struggling with life. This may be related to studies, a new job, matric results, unemployment, or an underlying mental health condition.

A sense of failure during significant life events can be overwhelming – but the experience needn't mean the race is over.

3 WAYS TO COPE WITH FAILURE:

1. Understand that we all fail sometimes

Even the most successful people in the world have experienced failure at some point in their life. Failure doesn't mean there's something wrong with you – it just suggests that you haven't found the right formula yet.



2. Adopt a healthy habit

Experiencing failure can affect your self-esteem, leading to poor habits such as eating unhealthy foods and poor sleeping patterns. This is a good time to form new, healthier habits like exercising regularly (going for daily walks) or socialising with loved ones in the outdoors. A change of environment can boost your self-esteem, spark creative thoughts, and improve your overall health.



3. Reach out

While most individuals experience failure at some point, it doesn't hurt any less – especially when it seems that everyone around you is doing well. It's fine to acknowledge that you're feeling low, but if you notice that these feelings affect your daily life, you should reach out for help.

If, as a parent, you become aware that your child is experiencing difficulties, reassure them that they're not alone and encourage them to seek help with your assistance.



There is no shame in asking for help – talk to a confidant, join a support group, or speak to your doctor. Also, POLMED has a Mental Health Programme which aims to improve your quality of life and empower 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.

Failure can be difficult, but it's not the end of the road. In fact, with failure come many lessons that can help you to achieve your goals, so don't let it stop you from doing so.

References:

- <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/15-highly-successful-people-who-failed-their-way-success.html>
- <https://www.safmh.org/world-suicide-prevention-day-2022/>

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Prediabetes: prevention is better than cure



Prediabetes is diagnosed when an individual has blood sugar levels higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered type 2 diabetes.



±15% OF SOUTH AFRICANS

HAVE PREDIABETES



Prediabetes can develop into type 2 diabetes if left undiagnosed or unmanaged. Type 2 diabetes already affects:

4.4 MILLION SOUTH AFRICAN ADULTS

Recognising prediabetes and managing it can help protect you from developing type 2 diabetes.

COULD I HAVE PREDIABETES?

Prediabetes often goes undetected until it develops into type 2 diabetes, which has more noticeable symptoms.

If you're experiencing any of the following symptoms, you should visit your doctor to be tested:



Constant thirst



Unintentional weight loss (going down one dress size in a month)



Constant hunger



Frequent urination at night



Blurred vision



Dry skin



Numbness or tingling in the hands and feet



Sores healing slowly

TESTING FOR PREDIABETES

The most accurate test for prediabetes is done after an overnight fast.

Below are readings for fasting glucose levels that are healthy, as well as those that indicate prediabetes and diabetes:

NORMAL READING

≤ 6.0 mmol/L

PREDIABETES READING

6.1 – 6.9 mmol/L

DIABETES READING

≥ 7.0 mmol/L

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

MANAGING PREDIABETES

If you're diagnosed with prediabetes, it's essential that you follow your doctor's guidelines on how to manage this condition. This will include lifestyle changes such as:



Losing weight



Exercising



Quitting smoking



Following a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains

Prediabetes doesn't have to develop into type 2 diabetes. You can reduce this risk, but only if you know you have prediabetes. Prevention is always better than cure.

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- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prediabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20355278>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/prediabetes-what-you-need-to-know/>
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- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-you-should-know-about-unexplained-weight-loss-and-diabetes/>

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Why should I have a mammogram?



Breast cancer is the most diagnosed cancer among South African women.

1 in 27  at risk for breast cancer

Did you know that **1% to 3%** of all breast cancer cases affect men? 

As alarming as these statistics are:

If breast cancer is **detected early** survival rate can be as high as **40%**

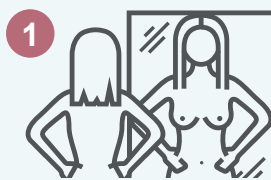
THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO SCREEN FOR BREAST CANCER:

1. Self-examination

This should be done once a month (for women, this should be two days after your menstrual cycle has ended).

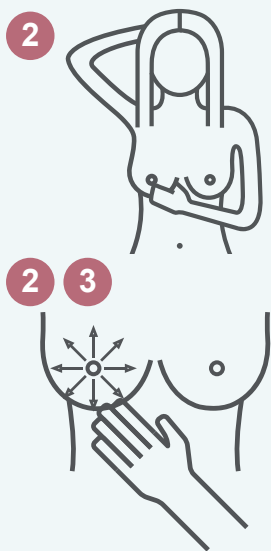
1. Stand topless in front of a mirror

- Straighten your shoulders and place your hands on your hips.
- Examine your breasts for any changes in shape, size or colour.
- Look out for nipple discharge.
- Raise your arms and do the same.



2. Lie down on your back

- Place your head on a pillow. Put your right hand under your head, then use your left hand to feel your right breast and surrounding area for any lumps.
- Use your finger pads to gently, but firmly, press down and move around.
- Do the same with the left breast, using your right hand.



3. Check in the shower

- While standing in the shower, repeat the steps you followed when lying down.

2. Mammogram

A mammogram is the official medical method of checking for breast cancer. The X-ray procedure can reportedly detect breast cancer three years before you can feel it.



Women between

40 AND 69 YEARS OF AGE

should have a mammogram once every two years, unless motivated.



POLMED has screening benefits that are paid from preventative care benefits (risk benefit), which includes mammograms. For breast cancer screening these fall under ICD: Z12.3 and ICD: Z01.6.

Please consult your benefit guide to view all available preventive care benefits.

AM I AT RISK?

Risk factors for breast cancer include:



Age



Family history of breast cancer



Lack of physical activity



Being overweight or obese



Drinking alcohol

Following diagnosis, your doctor will work with you to formulate a treatment plan based on your specific circumstances.

Regular breast self-examinations and mammograms can help ensure the early detection of breast cancer. With early detection, there are more treatment options and better prospects for survival.

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