

# YOUR CARE POLMED

July 2023



“Self-care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel. ”

Eleanor Brown



Dear Member

Self-care takes many forms. It can be as basic as taking a shower, getting enough exercise, or making sure you're doing all that you can to stay healthy. Ensuring you and your family are eating nutritious meals is fundamental to your overall health and wellness. A healthy diet can help prevent conditions like hypertension or Type 2 diabetes.

That's why we're diving into the differences between good and bad carbs this month. In our monthly article, we're exploring how these different carbs impact your blood sugar. We also share a handy guide on the benefits of quitting smoking, as well as an infographic on the importance of childhood immunisations.

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

YourCare Team

## In this issue...

### IMMUNISATIONS HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

Childhood vaccinations help prevent up to five million deaths worldwide, every year. Vaccinations are not only safe, but they're one of the best ways to keep your children healthy.

[READ MORE...](#)

### STOP SMOKING AND IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

Did you know that smokers are up to 40% more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes? Quitting will not only improve your health, but it will help you manage any existing chronic condition, like hypertension.

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### GOOD CARBS VS BAD CARBS

70% of Type 2 diabetes cases worldwide have been linked to diet. Mainly this involves the consumption of processed foods, including refined carbohydrates.

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## FIGHT FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

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



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## Immunisations help protect your child's health



### STUDIES SUGGEST THAT



# 1 IN 5

South African children are under-immunised.

This is partly due to vaccine hesitancy brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and, in particular, a



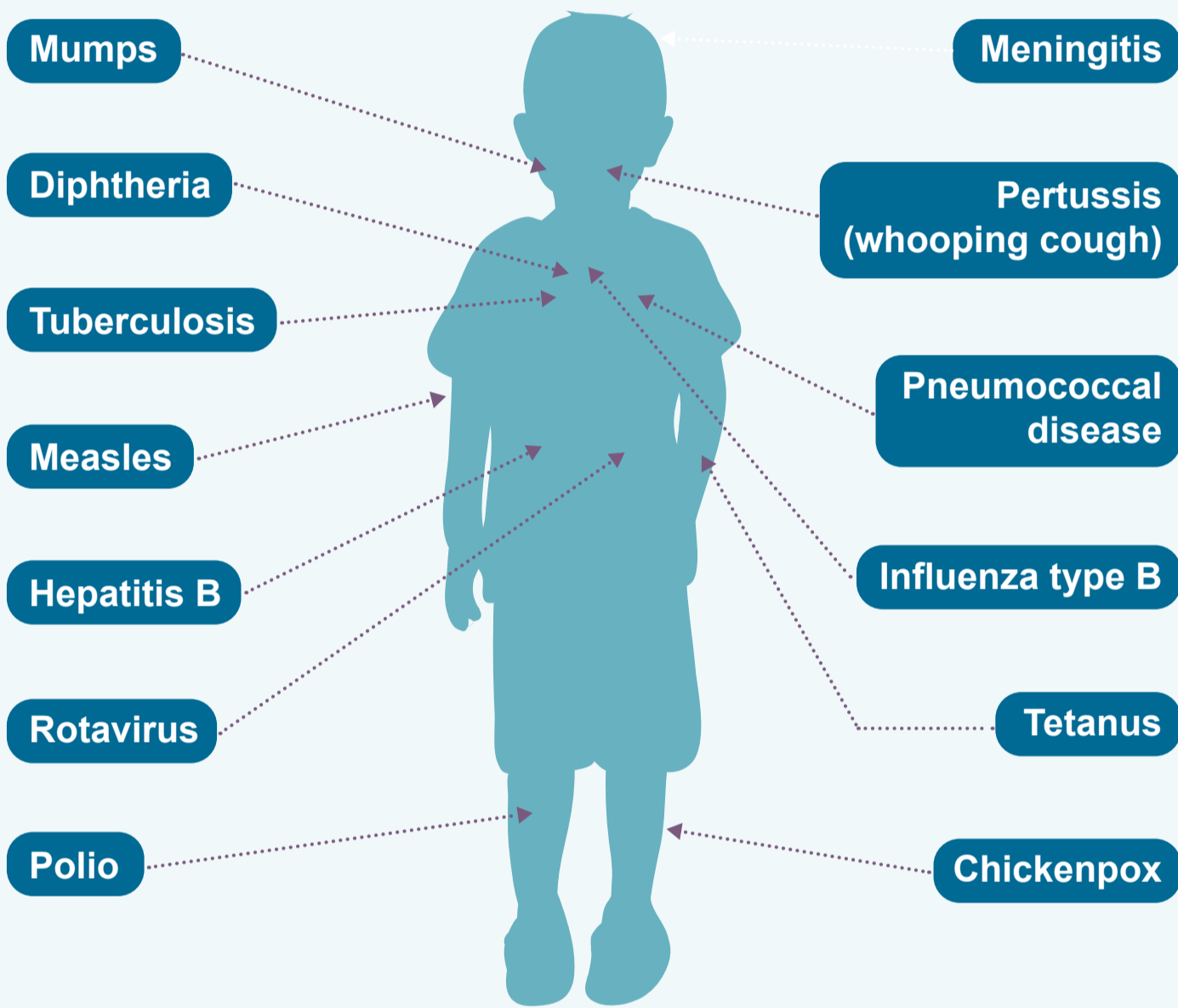
## 30% decline

 in confidence in childhood vaccines.

However, childhood vaccines are not only safe; immunising your children is still one of the best ways to help keep them healthy.

### BENEFITS OF CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS

Childhood vaccinations help **prevent 3.5 to 5 million deaths** worldwide every year from the following conditions:



The decline in confidence in childhood vaccines and the failure to vaccinate has led to recent outbreaks of measles, mumps and diphtheria in South Africa.

These conditions can cause serious complications, such as:



Severe diarrhea



Blindness



Kidney failure



Death

### WHEN TO VACCINATE YOUR CHILD

Immunisation must occur at the correct time for the vaccine to be effective.

Parents, guardians and caregivers should follow the routine childhood immunisation schedule in the **South African Expanded Programme on Immunisation**. This timetable is available on the National Department of Health website at <https://www.health.gov.za/immunization/> and indicates the vaccines a child should get and their age.



**You can keep up to date with the childhood immunisation schedule by:**

- Printing a copy of the schedule and keeping it where you can easily see it, such as on your fridge.
- Setting reminders on your phone for one week before, as well as the day before the scheduled vaccination.



POLMED covers childhood immunisation according to the DOH schedule, for children 12 years and younger. For information on this benefit, you can contact us at: **0860 765 633** or email: [polmed@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmed@medscheme.co.za)

**Ensuring that children are vaccinated is an effective way to secure their health and future.**

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## Stop smoking and improve your health



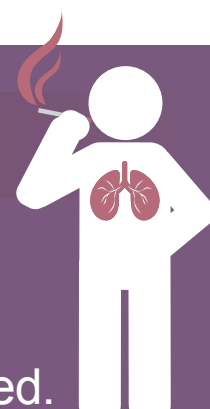
### SMOKING IS DETRIMENTAL TO YOUR HEALTH.

Statistics reveal that around

**7.5% of deaths**



among South Africans are smoking-related.



Additionally, over **13%** of deaths due to **non-communicable diseases**, like these, are linked to tobacco use:



Stroke



Ischaemic heart disease



Diabetes



Lung cancer



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Quitting smoking will not only improve your health, but it will also enable you to manage chronic medical conditions better.



### THE EFFECTS OF SMOKING ON CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITIONS



#### DIABETES

- Smokers are 30% to 40% more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes.
- For the around 4.2 million South Africans living with diabetes, smoking or exposure to smoking can increase the risk of complications such as kidney disease, infections and ulcers.



#### HEART DISEASE

- Smoking is the second leading cause of heart disease in South Africa.
- Over 50% of adult smokers will develop heart disease.
- Those who smoke face twice the risk of a fatal heart attack, stroke or heart failure compared to non-smokers.



#### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)

Almost one in three South Africans live with hypertension, and smoking can exacerbate the condition.



#### CANCER

- One-third of all cancers are caused by tobacco use.
- Smoking can increase the risk of throat, lung, kidney and cervical cancer.



#### CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Smoking is the main risk factor for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which causes breathing-related issues.

### BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING

The various benefits of quitting smoking can include:



Risk of heart disease, repeat heart attacks and death from heart disease:  
**REDUCED BY 50%**



Blood pressure:  
**REDUCED BY ABOUT 10 TO 20 MMHG**



Risk of lung cancer:  
**REDUCED BY 30% TO 50% WITHIN 10 YEARS**



Risk of mouth cancer:  
**REDUCED BY 50% WITHIN FIVE YEARS**



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease:  
**SLOWING THE PROGRESSION OF THIS DISEASE**



Diabetes:  
**IMPROVING BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL**

### HOW TO CUT BACK AND ULTIMATELY STOP SMOKING



#### 1. SET A GOAL:

You could try setting a goal. For example, commit to smoking only one cigarette daily for a specific period and then stop altogether.



#### 2. REGISTER ON A STOP-SMOKING PROGRAMME:

As a POLMED member, you can register for the GoSmoke Free Programme, at a participating pharmacist. Contact us at **0860 765 633**, or email [polmed@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polmed@medscheme.co.za) for more info.



#### 3. JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP:

Support and motivation can make a difficult journey more manageable.

While quitting can be difficult, it is doable and can boost your overall health.

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## Good carbs versus bad carbs



While several factors can contribute to developing **Type 2 diabetes**, **70.3%** of diabetes cases worldwide have been linked to diet.



Mainly, this involves the consumption of processed meat and refined (i.e. bad) carbs.

### DIABETES AND CARBS

Carbs produce and store energy for the body. When you eat carbs, the body breaks them down into glucose, raising blood sugar. The body then releases insulin to normalise blood sugar levels.

The combination of a poor diet (for example, bad carbs) and other risk factors like obesity and genetics can affect how your body makes and uses insulin to manage glucose. This can lead to insulin resistance, often a precursor to **Type 2 diabetes**.

### THE BEST CARBS FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DIABETES

Not all carbs are created equal. Bad carbs spike blood sugar levels and increase the risk of heart disease and high cholesterol. Good carbs, like high-fibre-containing carbs, on the other hand, are absorbed slowly. Remember that good carbs may also play a role in making the body more sensitive to insulin.



#### BAD CARBS – TO AVOID

- White rice
- Mealie meal
- White bread
- Cakes and biscuits
- Fat cakes (vetkoek/magwinya)
- Sweets and chocolates



#### GOOD CARBS – TO ENJOY

- Apples and bananas
- Brown rice
- Brown bread
- Samp
- Beans
- Lentils
- Nuts

While bad carbs can increase the risk of diabetes and complications, choosing good carbs can help prevent the development of diabetes and also plays a role in managing this condition.

**Each individual may, however, need different dietary advice based on their circumstances. It would be best if you spoke to your healthcare provider or diabetic nurse educator so that they can formulate the best diet plan for you.**

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