

YOUR CARE POLMED

November 2023

“There is a crack in
everything; that’s how
the light gets in. .”

Leonard Cohen

Dear Member

Did you know that almost 1 in 2 adults with diabetes remain undiagnosed? That’s around 240 million worldwide! And the majority of that is diabetes type 2. Do you know what the symptoms are?

14 November is the annual World Diabetes Day, where awareness around this metabolic condition and its treatment is highlighted. The current theme is delaying or preventing type 2, knowing your risk and knowing your response. Our monthly article shares some of the common symptoms that you should know.

We also share two infographics that shine a light on two common conditions: epilepsy and lung cancer. By understanding epilepsy better, you can support someone when they experience a seizure. As lung cancer is one of the most common cancers, we share ways to cut your risk, allowing you to keep breathing easily.

As always, have a healthy, active and happy month ahead!

YourCare Team

In this issue...

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Projections suggest that 783 million people worldwide will be living with diabetes by 2045. World Diabetes Day aims to raise awareness about preventing and managing the condition.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

UNDERSTANDING EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition affecting 50 million people globally. With 8% of South Africans at risk of experiencing an epileptic seizure, knowing what to do is vital.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

PREVENT LUNG CANCER

In South Africa, lung cancer is the fourth most common cancer and the number one cause of death due to cancer. Do you know the causes?

[▶ 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.



**FIGHT FOR
WHAT'S RIGHT**

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

YOUR CARE POLMED

November 2023



WORLD DIABETES DAY

With projections suggesting that

783 MILLION PEOPLE worldwide will be living with diabetes by **2045**,

World Diabetes Day, commemorated in November, aims to raise awareness about preventing and managing the condition.

DO I HAVE DIABETES?

Around 11.3% of South Africans live with diabetes, yet almost half are undiagnosed.

Because undiagnosed diabetes can lead to a host of complications affecting the eyes, kidneys, heart, and nerves, understanding the symptoms is important so you can be screened.

Symptoms of diabetes include:



Diabetes is diagnosed through a blood test that measures glucose levels.

Healthy glucose levels are considered to be < 7.0 mmol/L when fasting and ≤ 11.1 mmol/L when randomly tested.

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

LIVING WITH DIABETES

Diabetes is a manageable condition – and, in the case of type 2 diabetes, preventable. Adopting the following habits can help protect you from developing type 2 diabetes. If you've been diagnosed with the condition, it can help reduce your risk of complications.

Exercise regularly
Staying active improves your body's insulin sensitivity, which is important to maintain normal blood glucose levels. Walking, running, swimming, and dancing are good options.

Follow a healthy diet
A well-balanced diet can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes by 35% and prevent glucose spikes in those living with diabetes.

You should include non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli and spinach, whole grains, and legumes, and avoid processed foods.

Manage your weight
Obesity is linked to 87% of type 2 diabetes cases in South Africa.

Following a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting regular quality sleep, and monitoring your stress levels can help.

Quit smoking
Not only are those who smoke 30% to 40% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, but smoking can make it more difficult to manage the condition.

Identifying your smoking triggers and joining a support group can help you kick this habit.

REFERENCES:

- <https://idf.org/about-diabetes/diabetes-facts-figures/>
- <https://idf.org/our-network/regions-and-members/africa/members/south-africa/>
- <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications>
- <https://sweetlife.org.za/do-you-know-the-5-symptoms-of-diabetes/>
- <https://www.diabetessa.org.za/testing/>
- <https://docs.mymembership.co.za/docmanager/d7a3ded1-2f30-4ff2-b566-b69abe5d7a8e/00150685.pdf>
- <https://www.everydayhealth.com/type-2-diabetes/how-exercise-helps-prevent-and-manage-type-2-diabetes/>
- <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/disease-prevention/diabetes-prevention/preventing-diabetes-full-story/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/meal-plan-method.html>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8199430/>
- <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-lose-weight-as-fast-as-possible>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html>

Published: November 2023

YOUR CARE POLMED

November 2023



UNDERSTANDING EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition affecting

50 MILLION PEOPLE GLOBALLY



In South Africa, around **1 in every 100** people is living with epilepsy.

And with **8% of South Africans** at risk of experiencing an epileptic seizure, knowing what to do is important.



SYMPTOMS OF EPILEPSY

SYMPTOMS OF EPILEPSY INCLUDE:



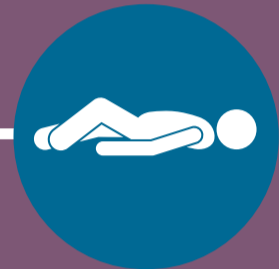
Seizures



Anxiety



Stiff muscles



Loss of consciousness
or awareness

These epilepsy symptoms can cause memory loss, injuries and reduced mobility.

MYTHS ABOUT EPILEPSY

THERE ARE MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EPILEPSY, WHICH CAN AFFECT THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CONDITION. THE MOST COMMON INCLUDE:

Epilepsy is a mental condition. ❌

Rather, epilepsy is a brain disorder. ✅



Individuals experiencing a seizure swallow their tongues. ❌

It's impossible to swallow your tongue. ✅



Individuals with epilepsy can't work. ❌

Once seizures are managed and controlled, individuals with epilepsy can live a normal life. ✅



Epilepsy has no treatment. ❌

While there is no cure for epilepsy, treatments are available to manage the condition. ✅

LIVING WITH EPILEPSY

Seizure-preventing medications can assist up to 80% of those living with epilepsy. Seizures may still occur, so knowing how to manage them using the **Stay. Safe. Side.** method is important:

- **Stay** with the person until the seizure ends.
- Keep the person **Safe** and time the seizure.
- If the person starts convulsing or isn't awake, turn them on their **Side**.



IMPORTANT: DO NOT restrain them or place anything in their mouth.

Call for medical assistance immediately if the seizure lasts longer than five minutes or if the individual experiences another seizure or appears in distress.

Although seizures may complicate work and school life, they shouldn't prevent individuals from gaining employment or finishing their studies. With a proper diagnosis, the correct medication and precautions, those living with epilepsy can live a long and healthy life.

REFERENCES

- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/epilepsy>
- <https://www.gov.za/NationalEpilepsyDay2020>
- <https://ewn.co.za/2023/06/23/about-8-of-south-africans-may-experience-an-epileptic-seizure-epilepsy-sa>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/epilepsy/symptoms-causes/syc-20350093>
- <https://www.efepa.org/living-with-epilepsy/>
- <https://www.epilepsy.com/complications-risks/social-concerns>
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/medical-myths-all-about-epilepsy>
- https://www.efepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Sz-First-Aid_EF_Eastern-Pennsylvania.jpg

Published: November 2023

YOUR CARE POLMED

November 2023



PREVENT LUNG CANCER AND BREATHE BETTER

Alongside breast cancer, lung cancer is the most common cancer worldwide.



Most common cancer in men



Second most common in women



In South Africa, lung cancer is the **fourth most common cancer** and the **number one cause of death due to cancer**.



Yet, despite these statistics, awareness of the condition is low. **The most important thing to know is that early diagnosis helps to save lives.**

WHAT CAUSES LUNG CANCER?

THE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS INCLUDE:



SMOKING

11.1 million South Africans currently smoke tobacco.



SECOND-HAND SMOKE

40% of South Africans are exposed to second-hand smoke at home, work and restaurants.



FAMILY HISTORY

A family history of lung cancer doubles your risk of developing the condition.

SYMPTOMS OF LUNG CANCER

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LUNG CANCER INCLUDE:



A new and persistent cough



Coughing up blood



Breathlessness



Chest pain



Unplanned weight loss



Headaches

HOW TO PREVENT LUNG CANCER

By stopping smoking and using tobacco, you can protect the health of your lungs and breathe better. And 10 years after quitting, your risk for lung cancer will be about half that of a smoker.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR STOPPING SMOKING:



SET A GOAL

Commit to smoking fewer cigarettes a day or smoking only on alternate days. Then, slowly cut back and eventually stop.



AVOID TRIGGERS

Identifying triggers, such as smoking at parties or when stressed, can help you quit.



AVOID SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Stay clear of smokers.



JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

The extra support will help, and you may learn from others.



FIND HEALTHIER STRESS-RELIEVERS

Healthier alternatives to stress relief include yoga, journaling or therapy.



EXERCISE REGULARLY

Physical activity can help with tobacco cravings and boost lung health.



REGISTER ON A STOP-SMOKING PROGRAMME

POLMED have partnered with GoSmokeFree to support our members in their quitting journey. Visit www.polmed.co.za or call **0860 765 633** for more info on this programme.

If detected early, the survival rate for lung cancer is over 70%. So, if you experience any of the symptoms of lung cancer, consult your doctor immediately.

REFERENCES

- <https://cansa.org.za/lung-cancer/>
- <https://ascopost.com/issues/september-10-2021/cancer-on-the-global-stage-incidence-and-cancer-related-mortality-in-south-africa/>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lung-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20374620>
- https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ncds/ncd-surveillance/data-reporting/south-africa/gats2021_south_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=de5704b6_1&download=true
- <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-global/africa/south-africa>
- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/benefits-of-quitting-smoking-over-time.html>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/quit-smoking/in-depth/nicotine-craving/art-20045454>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6790462/>

Published: November 2023