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OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE



YOUR CARE POLMED

June 2024

“Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It’s about how you drive, not where you’re going.”

Noam Shpancer

Dear Member

Ups and downs are normal parts of being human. Mood shifts, which we all experience as we go through life, are part of the human experience. But when is a low mood just a low mood or something a little more serious?

With estimates showing that 1 in 3 South Africans experience a mental health issue, it’s important to know when your low mood is more than just lingering sadness. Depression is different from your regular mood changes and feelings about everyday life. It can affect all aspects of life, including relationships with family, friends and community¹.

Seeking professional help should be your first port of call on your mental wellness journey. But there are things that you can do in conjunction to help lift your mood and protect your mental health. This month we share an article that dives into the benefits of activity on mood with some ideas to get you moving.

We also share our monthly infographics, with this month’s topics including why it’s important to take your chronic medication as prescribed and the importance of preventive cancer screening tests.

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

YourCare Team

1. *Sunday Times* article: “Is South Africa a depressed nation? Statistics say we are”, online:
<https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/2023-10-13-is-south-africa-a-depressed-nation-statistics-say-we-are/>

In this issue...

GET ACTIVE AND LIFT YOUR MOOD

Did you know that staying active and exercising regularly are some of the ways you can protect and promote your mental health?

[➤ READ MORE...](#)

SURVIVING CANCER: FROM DIAGNOSIS TO VICTORY

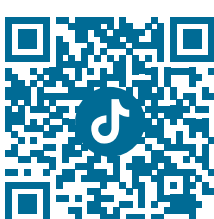
In June, we celebrate International Cancer Survivor Month to honour those who have survived cancer and encourage individuals to complete preventative screenings.

[➤ READ MORE...](#)

EVERY DOSE COUNTS: A GUIDE TO TAKING YOUR CHRONIC MEDICINE

Chronic medical conditions are the cause of 41 MILLION DEATHS globally a year. Despite this, many people don’t take their chronic medicine as prescribed.

[➤ READ MORE...](#)





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GET ACTIVE AND LIFT YOUR MOOD.

Statistics tell us that **one in three South Africans** is living with poor mental health.



This not only affects the South African economy, reportedly costing it **R19 billion annually** but also puts individuals at risk for substance abuse, insomnia, unemployment and suicide.



Did you know that staying active and exercising regularly are some of the ways you can protect and promote your mental health?

HOW STAYING ACTIVE CAN BOOST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

The benefits for your mental health include:



Stress relief

71% of South Africans admit that stress has affected their ability to function in the last year.

Exercise reduces levels of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol and improves the body's response to stress.



Anti-depressive effects

Just over 25% of South Africans are living with depression. Staying active releases brain chemicals called endorphins, which can alleviate depressive symptoms and reduce negative thoughts.



Anti-anxiety effects

A survey of 3 402 people found that 17.8% of South African respondents likely live with anxiety. By releasing endorphins, regular exercise helps to ease symptoms of anxiety.

EXERCISE GUIDE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Whether you're an athlete or new to fitness, there are many ways to be active – even during winter. Try:

- Exercising indoors with online tutorials
- Playing with your kids in the yard
- Gardening
- Household chores
- Dancing
- Walking your dog
- Bowling with family and friends



Remember: Check with your healthcare provider before starting a new exercise programme if you're unsure whether it's safe to exercise, have a previous injury, or are at a high risk for injury.

We know that exercise is good for the body, but it's also one of the cheapest and most natural ways of promoting mental health. Take the time to move and reap the rewards of a healthy body and mind.

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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 with your membership number and contact details.



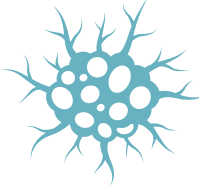
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SURVIVING CANCER: FROM DIAGNOSIS TO VICTORY

**CANCER IS A LEADING
CAUSE OF DEATH
WORLDWIDE.**



**IT'S THE FOURTH LEADING
CAUSE OF MORTALITY
IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

In June, we celebrate International Cancer Survivor Month to honour those who have survived cancer and encourage individuals to complete preventative screenings.



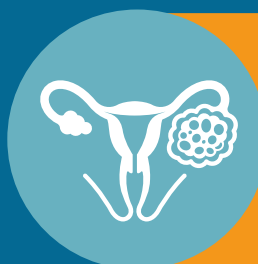
PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS HELP SAVE LIVES

We know that our best chance of survival is through preventative screening.

Statistics tell us that, if caught early:



Breast cancer has
a **99%**
survival rate



Cervical cancer
has a **91%**
survival rate



Prostate cancer
has a **100%**
survival rate



**Melanoma
(a form of skin cancer)**
has a **100%**
survival rate

A GUIDE TO CANCER SCREENINGS

Breast cancer:

Breast self-examinations should be carried out monthly, checking for lumps, which either feel like a soft, mobile button or a painful, immobile and hard button.

Cervical cancer:

A Pap smear examines the cells of the cervix for any changes and abnormalities.

Prostate cancer:

Higher levels of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) may occur in those with prostate cancer, so screenings are essential. Men between the ages of 45 and 70 should **discuss prostate health with their doctor.**

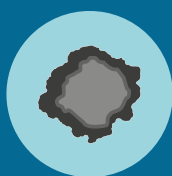
Melanoma (skin cancer):

It's important to regularly check your skin for any changes, as the first sign of skin cancer is often a new mole or a non-healing sore spot on the skin.

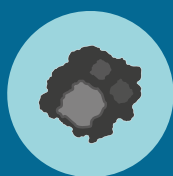
Use the **ABCDE** guideline to help determine whether you need to consult your doctor:



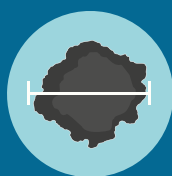
Asymmetry
Half of the
mole looks
different from
the other half.



Border
The borders
of the mole
are irregular
and not
well-defined.



Colour
The mole's
colour ranges
from brown to
black or blue.



Diameter
The mole's size
is bigger than a
new pencil
eraser.



Evolving
The mole's
shape, size and
colour change
over time, and it
may even begin
to bleed or itch.



Remember: Consult your member guide for more information about your available screening-related benefits.

Cancer doesn't discriminate. Anyone is at risk, so it's important to celebrate those who have survived and learn from their journeys.

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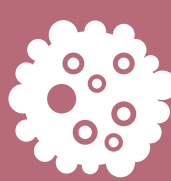
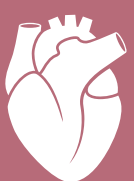
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EVERY DOSE COUNTS: A GUIDE TO TAKING YOUR CHRONIC MEDICINE

Chronic medical conditions (also known as non-communicable diseases) include heart disease, diabetes, cancer and asthma.



Chronic medical conditions are the cause of
41 MILLION DEATHS
globally a year.



Despite this, many people don't take their chronic medicine as prescribed.



HOW MANY PEOPLE TAKE THEIR CHRONIC MEDICINE AS PRESCRIBED?

In Africa, **less than 40% of people** take their chronic medicine as they should.



Often, people simply forget to take it. You can manage your chronic medical conditions. But you need to remember to take your chronic medicine and follow healthier lifestyle habits to achieve this.

WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE YOUR CHRONIC MEDICINE?

Taking your chronic medicine as prescribed will help keep you healthy and improve your quality of life.

It helps to reduce the risk of complications such as:

For diabetes: Nerve and kidney damage, vision loss, or amputation

For hypertension and heart disease: Heart attack, stroke or death

For obesity: Chronic kidney disease, heart disease and cancer

For tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS: Weakened immune system and death

HOW TO REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

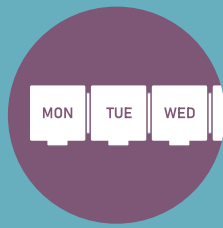
If it's hard for you to follow your medicine schedule, try establishing a routine:



Put a reminder on your phone, fridge, desk or computer to take your medicine.



Make it a habit by linking it to a specific daily activity, such as brushing your teeth in the morning or with your evening meal (depending on how it's prescribed).



Use a weekly pillbox with compartments for different days.



After taking your medicine, flip the pill bottle/container over and keep it visible. If it's upright, you haven't taken your medicine yet.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR WHEN YOU HAVE CONCERNS

If you're not taking your medicine because of side effects, confusion, or fears, speak to your doctor about your concerns. Don't skip doses and only stop on the advice of your doctor.



Taking your chronic medicine as prescribed is vital to managing your chronic medical conditions. Follow these tips to help you remember.

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