



POLMED

OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE



YOUR CARE POLMED

August 2025

“When women take care of their health, they become their own best friend.”

Maya Angelou

Dear POLMED Member,

Did you know that women are more likely to prioritise the health of their loved ones before their own? It's true, studies show that women often delay or skip healthcare appointments because of work, family responsibilities, or even guilt. But here's the truth: looking after your health isn't selfish, it's essential.

This August, we're shining a spotlight on women's health. While progress has been made, South African women still face significant health challenges. In this month's infographic, we unpack some of the most pressing issues – from access to care to common chronic conditions. We also highlight the importance of preventative screening and how early detection of potential problems leads to more effective treatment and improved outcomes.

In our featured article, we focus on the vital issues impacting women's health, especially reproductive health and sexual wellbeing

As always, we hope you have a happy and healthy month.

Yours in health,
The YourCare Team

In this issue...

PREVENTION IS POWER: THE BENEFITS OF PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS

Being proactive by undergoing regular checks and screenings will help ensure the early detection of any health issues and prompt, appropriate treatment as soon as possible.

[➤ READ MORE...](#)

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S MONTH AND PRIORITISING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

It's also a meaningful opportunity to focus on vital issues impacting women's health, especially reproductive and sexual health wellbeing.

[➤ READ MORE...](#)

MAKE YOUR HEALTH A PRIORITY THIS NATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH

In addition to celebrating women's achievements, National Women's Month shines the spotlight on women's health, calling for better initiatives to address the health needs of women.

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Prevention is power: The benefits of preventative screenings

Staying healthy means staying one step ahead, with preventive healthcare.



AFTER ALL, PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

Being proactive, by going for regular checks and screenings, will help ensure early detection of any health issues and appropriate treatment as soon as possible.



IMPORTANT PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE SCREENINGS AND VACCINES

Stay up-to-date with:



Blood pressure test

Around **one in three** South African adults live with hypertension (high blood pressure).

Identifying elevated blood pressure levels early enables you to change your lifestyle habits and help prevent hypertension.

Regular screenings also help you manage hypertension once diagnosed, reducing the risk for complications.



Blood glucose test

Around **7%** of South African adults live with diabetes.

This test is essential for preventing type 2 diabetes and managing diabetes if you've been diagnosed with this chronic condition.



Cholesterol test

High cholesterol can increase the risk for both heart disease and stroke.

Approximately 1 in 4 South Africans or 25% of the population have high cholesterol. This equates to roughly 15 million people, based on the current population in South Africa.



Body mass index (BMI) check

Maintaining a healthy BMI – between 18.5 and 24.9 – will help reduce the percentage of South Africans (currently estimated at **50%**) who are either overweight or obese.



Pap smear

Cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in South Africa.

This test screens for cervical cancer by checking for abnormalities in the cells of the cervix.



Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

The HPV vaccine can prevent HPV infection and reduce the likelihood of cervical cancer later in life.



Mammogram

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.

Early detection through this X-ray examination of the breast area can help reduce deaths due to breast cancer by over **40%**.



Prostate screening

Around **13%** of deaths among South African men are related to prostate cancer.

Screenings include:

- Digital rectal exam (DRE)
- Prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test

Your healthcare provider will advise if you need these screenings.



Managing Chronic Conditions with POLMED

If you've been diagnosed with a chronic condition based on abnormal test results, POLMED offers a dedicated Disease Risk Management Programme to support your health journey.

To register, simply email polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za or contact us directly at **0860 765 633**.

Take control of your health with the right support - POLMED is here to help

HOW CAN YOU REMEMBER TO GET YOUR PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS?



Set calendar reminders.



Go for your screenings with a family member/friend.

Healthcare screenings can be done at your local pharmacy or GP.
Take charge of your health by scheduling an appointment today.

THE TABLE BELOW CONTAINS THE LIST OF ALL THE PREVENTATIVE CARE BENEFITS:

Benefit description	Age	Tariff codes/ICD 10 ¹	Cycle
One wellness measure per year (Tariff code 55500) inclusive of: Blood pressure test Body mass index (BMI) calculation Waist-to-hip ratio measurement Cholesterol screening Glucose screening Healthy diet counselling (if the member is overweight)		55500	Annually Annually Annually Annually Annually Annually
Occult blood test (screening for peptic ulcer disease) (members over the age of 50 years)	> 50		Annually
Flu vaccine		732826, 07355	Annually
Pneumococcal vaccine			Limited to one every five years
Consultation and topical fluoride application for children aged 0-6 years	0 - 6	8101, 8151	Annually
Caries risk assessment for children aged 0-14 years (Clinical information to be submitted to managed care)	0 - 14	8102	Once every second year
Topical application of fluoride	7 - 16	8151	Annually
Periodontal disease and caries risk assessment for adults 19 years of age and older (Clinical information to be submitted to managed care)	> 19	8102	Once every second year
Fissure sealants for 5 - 25 year olds	5 - 25	8163	Maximum of 4 (four) per annum Polishing (code 8155) and prophylaxis (code 8159) 2 (two) times a year. Subject to managed care protocols
Contraceptives		Contraceptive formulary applies Z30 Female	
HIV Counselling and tests HIV counselling and pre-counselling HCT consultation, rapid testing, and post counselling ELISA tests: 3932 Confirmation test: Western Blot 3969 (payable after HCT or ELISA tests)		3932 3969	Annually
Hepatitis B vaccine	18 years and older		
Maternal Pertussis Booster			Limited to 1 (one) vaccine per pregnancy in the third trimester, as part of the maternity program
Colorectal Cancer Screening	45 to 75 Years		Stool screening test every 2 years
Down Syndrome screening for pregnant females			First/second trimester screening, as part of the maternity program, subject to managed care protocols
Glaucoma Screening		3014	Once every third year
Cervical cancer screening (PAP Smear) • For all females aged 21-64 years old, except for those who have had a complete hysterectomy with no residual cervix	21 - 64	4566, Z12.4	Once every third year
HPV vaccine for girls aged 10-17 years	10 - 17	710020	2 x vaccinations per beneficiary
HPV screening once every five years for females aged 21 years and older	> 21	4434	Once every five years
Breast cancer screening (Mammogram)	40 - 74	3605, 34100, 34101, Z12.3, Z101.6	Once every two years, unless motivated
Pertussis booster vaccine (Beneficiaries 7 years and older)	> 7		
Prostate screening (For all males aged between 50 and 75 years)	50 - 75	4524	Annually
Post-trauma debriefing sessions utilising the Psycho-Social Network (only for active serving SAPS members)		86777, 86888, 89777	4 x individual or group sessions
Child immunisations provided by the Department of Health (DOH) for children twelve (12) years old and younger	12 <	As per DOH age schedule as per the Road to Health chart	Immunisation – National Department of Health
Infant hearing screening for infants up to 6 weeks of age	0 - 6 weeks		One test in- or out-of-hospital
Hib titer for 60 years and older, annually (Serology: IgM: specific antibody titer)	> 60	3946	Annually
Circumcision		2137	Subject to clinical protocols
Weight Management Program: 12-week exercise programme provided by BASA (Biokineticist Association of South Africa). It includes an HRA (Health Risk Assessment), group or individual exercise sessions, and dietitian and psychologists' consultations		Biokineticist Association of South Africa	One enrolment per beneficiary per annum. Subject to clinical protocols. Funded from Risk
GoSmokeFree Programme is delivered by a trained nurse through HealthCraft accredited pharmacies. The approach includes motivational behaviour changes, clinical measures (carbon monoxide readings), follow ups to manage relapse		Health Craft accredited pharmacies	6 x sessions Pre-assessment and five support sessions. One enrolment per beneficiary per annum. Funded from risk as part of preventative health care benefit.
Book a pre-quit assessment with a GoSmokeFree advisor. Visit gosmokefree.co.za for more information			Nicotine Replacement Therapy to be funded from Acute benefits for members enrolled on the programme.
Bone densitometry scan	> 65	50120, Z13.8	Once in a lifetime
COVID-19 vaccine benefit			Limited to PMB requirements

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Published: August 2025



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Celebrating Women's Month and prioritising reproductive health

Women's Month is a time to celebrate women's strength, resilience and achievements across our nation.



It's also a meaningful opportunity to focus on vital issues of women's health, especially reproductive and sexual health wellbeing. Here are key areas to prioritise for a healthier, empowered life:

BREAST HEALTH

Regular breast self-examinations, mammograms and awareness of early warning signs significantly improve the chances of successful treatment. Early detection remains the most effective way to ensure long-term health and survival. As a POLMED member, you have access to a mammogram screening once every two years for women aged 40-74.



CONTRACEPTIVE CHOICES

Choosing the right **contraception** helps prevent unplanned pregnancies and protects against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Options include hormonal methods (injections, oral pills, patches, intrauterine devices). Speak to your healthcare provider to find the best fit for your body and lifestyle. POLMED members have access to contraceptives as part of preventative benefits, which medical professionals can administer.



STI AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Infections such as syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, gonorrhoea and human Papillomavirus (HPV) can lead to serious health complications like pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility and certain cancers if left untreated. Practise **safe sex, get screened regularly**, and seek medical advice if you suspect exposure. HPV screening is available as part of your benefits and the HPV vaccine is available for girls aged 10-17 years.



HIV PREVENTION AND PrEP

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a daily oral medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV infection. It's especially important for women who may be at higher risk, such as those with HIV-positive partners. Regular HIV screening is essential when using PrEP.



CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

Routine **Pap smears and HPV tests** can detect early signs of cervical cancer - a preventable and treatable condition when caught early. Ask your healthcare provider how often you should be screened based on age and medical history. Pap smear screening for women aged 21-64 once every third year is covered by your benefits.



Your health is power
Taking charge of your reproductive health is one of the most empowering steps toward a full, vibrant life. Happy Women's Month!

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Make your health a priority this National Women's month

In addition to celebrating women's achievements, **National Women's Month** shines the spotlight on women's health, calling for better initiatives to address the health needs of women.



It also urges women, who often ignore their healthcare needs in favour of others, to prioritise their own health.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH CHALLENGES FACING SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN?

While there's been some progress, women in South Africa still face significant health challenges.

1. Maternal health



South Africa's maternal mortality rate (deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth) is around **100 deaths per 100 000 live births**.

This is significantly higher than in countries such as Norway and the Netherlands, with around one to four deaths per 100 000 live births.

The driving factors are non-pregnancy-related infections such as:

- Pneumonia
- TB
- Malaria
- HIV

There is a need for:

- Timely interventions
- Regular check-ups
- Improving the quality of maternal healthcare services



Expecting a baby?

POLMED offers a comprehensive Maternity Programme designed to support members throughout their pregnancy journey. Services are covered from your in-hospital benefit, ensuring peace of mind during this special time.

To register, contact us at **0860 765 633** or email polmedmaternity@medscheme.co.za.

Let POLMED be part of your journey to parenthood.

2. Gender-based violence (GBV)



In 2023/2024, South Africa recorded over **20 000 cases of GBV**.

It's crucial to address continued harmful acts of abuse against women for their physical and mental health.

Women need access to:

- Safe shelters
- Supportive counselling services



3. Reproductive health



Despite abortions being legal in South Africa since 1997, a significant proportion of women still undergo unsafe termination of pregnancy.

It's imperative that women not be barred from accessing reproductive health services.

The right to make decisions about their body and reproductive health is directly linked to a woman's economic and emotional freedom.

4. Chronic conditions



Globally, 53% of all people living with HIV are women and girls.

Diabetes is the leading cause of death in South African women.

You can manage chronic conditions and improve your quality of life through:

- Early diagnosis
- Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider
- Taking chronic medicine as prescribed
- Healthy eating
- Regular exercise
- Not smoking
- Limiting your alcohol intake



If you've been diagnosed with a chronic condition, POLMED offers a dedicated Disease Risk Management Programme to help you manage your health effectively.

To register, email polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za or call **0860 765 633**.

If your test results indicate that you are HIV positive, POLMED also provides a confidential and supportive HIV Management Programme. To join, call **0860 765 633** and request an application form, or email polmedhiv@medscheme.co.za.

Take control of your health with the right support - POLMED is here for you.

This National Women's Month, we urge you to make your health a priority. Whether it's booking a screening or seeking support, you should give as much attention to your own health as you do to your family's health.

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Published: August 2025