



POLMED
OUR INVESTMENT OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

YOUR CARE POLMED

April 2026

“Awareness is the first
step in healing.”

Dean Ornish

Dear POLMED Member,

April invites us to pay closer attention to the health challenges that shape our communities and families.

This month, we focus on understanding conditions that often go unnoticed or misunderstood, and how awareness can lead to better outcomes, earlier intervention, and stronger support systems.

We unpack childhood diabetes, a condition that requires careful daily management but, with the right support, allows children to live full and active lives. We also mark World Autism Awareness Day, highlighting the importance of acceptance, inclusion, and recognising that every individual experiences the world differently.

In addition, World Health Day reminds us that good health is not only about treatment, but also about prevention, education, and making informed choices every day.

Because awareness is not passive, it's something we act on.

Yours in health,
The YourCare Team

In this issue...

WORLD AUTISM DAY: BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE WORLD

World Autism Awareness Day, observed on 2 April, is dedicated to improving understanding of this often-misunderstood condition, encouraging acceptance and fostering inclusion.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

HEALTH FOR ALL THIS WORLD HEALTH DAY

On 7 April every year, the World Health Organization (WHO) leads the globe in observing World Health Day, a necessary reminder that health is a shared responsibility.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)

WHEN LITTLE LIVES NEED BIG CARE: UNDERSTANDING CHILDHOOD DIABETES

Childhood diabetes is a growing concern - and while South Africa lacks comprehensive national data, one trend is clear: 23% of South African children under the age of five are overweight or obese, placing many at higher risk of developing diabetes.

[▶ READ MORE...](#)



YOUR CARE POLMED

April 2026



World Autism Day: Building a more inclusive world

World Autism Awareness Day, observed on 2 April, is dedicated to improving understanding of this often-misunderstood condition, encouraging acceptance and fostering inclusion.



Currently, around

270 000 SOUTH AFRICANS

are living with autism, with around

5 000 NEW CASES

diagnosed annually.



Yet, despite the statistics, consensus is that autism is underdiagnosed – either through stigma or lack of knowledge about the condition – and this can increase the risk for impaired mental health and difficulty living a healthy life.

WHAT IS AUTISM?

A neurodevelopmental condition, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), influences how an individual communicates and interacts with others. There's no single cause, although research suggests that genetics and factors related to pregnancy may increase a child's risk for developing the condition.



SIGNS AND STRENGTHS

Autism is described as a spectral disorder because those with autism have different strengths and challenges and require different levels of support.

Common autistic traits among children include:

Not responding to their names

Difficulty interpreting body language, social cues or emotions

Making little or no eye contact

Repeating words or movements

Having highly focused interests

Preferring familiar routines



These traits influence daily functioning by shaping how autistic children communicate, interpret social situations, cope with sensory and environmental demands, and engage with learning.

Despite these traits, individuals with autism also exhibit the following strengths:

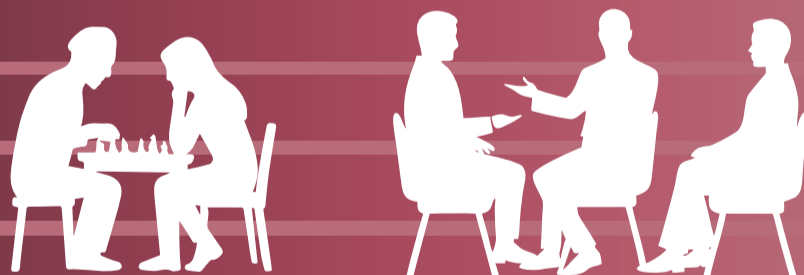
A strong sense of individualism

Formidable reasoning skills

Exceptional attention to detail

Powerful memory

Heightened senses



BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

You can join the worldwide movement towards creating a more inclusive society by:



Adopting methods in schools and workplaces that accommodate different learning styles and recognising the strengths of neurodiverse individuals.



Communicating directly and clearly with individuals on the autism spectrum, while respecting personality traits and providing sensory-friendly environments.



Providing support to individuals, their families, and caregivers.

World Autism Day is a reminder that we can each play our part in ensuring that individuals with autism feel seen, supported, and valued, and have access to the care and resources they need to thrive.

REFERENCES:

- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11088825/>
- <https://www.aut2know.co.za/autism/>
- <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/autism>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-autistic-perspective/james-ward-sinclair-mental-health-blog-2>

Published: April 2026

YOUR CARE POLMED

April 2026



Health for all This world health day

On 7 April every year, the World Health Organization (WHO) leads the globe in observing **World Health Day**, a necessary reminder that health is a shared responsibility.



With this year's theme being

**“HEALTH FOR ALL:
STRENGTHENING RESILIENT
HEALTH SYSTEMS”**,



the campaign puts the spotlight on

good health as a fundamental human right,

emphasising the importance of investments in and equitable access to strong health systems for a productive and healthy society.

A SUPPORTIVE MEDICAL AID

While a resilient health system requires functional hospitals and clinics, the role of medical aid schemes can't be undervalued.

Benefits include:



Screenings for blood pressure, blood glucose and weight indices (such as body mass index (BMI), and weight-to-hip ratio)



Wellness programmes



Chronic disease management



Access to healthcare practitioners

By taking advantage of these benefits, members will not only improve their health outcomes, but also reduce the strain on general healthcare services, ensuring a more accessible, equitable and sustainable system.

TAKE ACTION

This **World Health Day**, commit to building a healthier future for yourself and those around you by:



Going for your annual health screenings



Reviewing your medical aid benefits



Adopting healthier habits, such as balanced eating, regular exercise, and stress management.

A stronger, more resilient health system will ensure Health for All for generations to come.

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day>

Published: April 2026



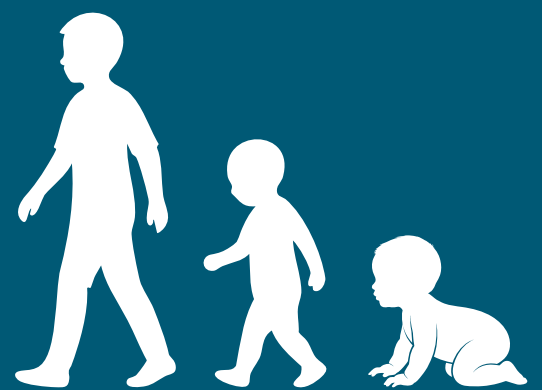
YOUR CARE POLMED

April 2026



When little lives need big care: Understanding childhood diabetes

Childhood diabetes is a growing concern - and while South Africa lacks comprehensive national data, one trend is clear: **23% of South African children under the age of five are overweight or obese**, placing many at higher risk of developing diabetes.



Childhood diabetes includes **type 1 and type 2 diabetes** diagnosed during childhood and adolescence.



Type 1 diabetes is a life-long autoimmune condition where the body cannot produce insulin, and it remains the most common type of diabetes diagnosed in children.

Type 2 diabetes, once rare in younger age groups, is now increasing. Factors such as reduced physical activity, poor nutrition, and the fact that 23% of children in South Africa live in severe food poverty contribute to this rise.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Early detection can make a life-changing difference. Look out for:



Frequent urination



Insatiable thirst



Unexplained weight loss



Extreme fatigue



Increased hunger



Recurring infections

If your child shows a combination of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately. Prompt diagnosis prevents complications and helps ensure your child can live a healthy and active life.

SUPPORT FROM US

At POLMED, diabetes is recognised as a Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) condition. Should your child be diagnosed and registered on our Disease Risk Management Programme, they will have access to:



Consultations with healthcare professionals



Medication



Screenings



Multidisciplinary care, including access to ophthalmologists and podiatrists

Childhood diabetes is a growing challenge for healthcare systems worldwide. Early detection, proper treatment, and ongoing support will ensure that the youth receive the care and support they need to thrive.

If you'd like more information about the Disease Risk Management Programme, you can contact the team directly:

Call: 0860 765 633 | **Email:** polmeddiseaseman@medscheme.co.za

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/press-releases/obesity-exceeds-underweight-first-time-among-school-age-children-and-adolescents>
- <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/living-with-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/children-and-diabetes>
- <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/press-releases/23-cent-children-south-africa-live-severe-child-food-poverty>
- <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/living-with-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/children-and-diabetes/symptoms>