



FOR **ALL OUR** PEOPLE



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MEDICAL FUND

TransCare

THIRD EDITION OF 2026

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Principal Officer's note



TransCare | Third Edition of 2026

Welcome to the third edition of TransCare for 2026. Spring is a wonderful time of year. The days warm up, birds nest and the flowers start to bloom. Unfortunately for many, however, those very flowers are the reason that spring is not a time for joy, but rather a time to stay indoors clutching a tissue to your streaming nose and eyes.

Seasonal allergies tend to peak in spring, making this the hardest time of year for allergy sufferers. To help reduce allergy symptoms, we urge members to take preventative steps like avoiding conditions that trigger an allergic reaction as much as possible and taking over-the-counter medication to stop symptoms early.

In this edition we include health articles that focus on fibromyalgia, a disorder that causes pain and tenderness throughout the body, as well as fatigue and trouble sleeping. We also look at dry eye, a condition where your eyes don't make enough tears to stay wet, or your tear ducts don't work correctly.

September is National Oral Health Month. We encourage our members to take care of their oral health. A regular checkup helps prevent oral diseases and allows any dental problems to be identified and treated early to help keep your mouth healthy.

Transmed hosted its annual general meeting (AGM) in August. The Fund would like to extend a special word of thanks to all members who were able to attend the AGM. Your presence was very much appreciated.

We trust that you will enjoy the newsletter. We welcome any suggestions that you may have on articles or member benefits you would like to see published in future newsletters. Please send your suggestions to suggestions@transmed.co.za.

Happy reading.

Petrus Wassermann
Principal Officer



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Fibromyalgia

What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a chronic (long-lasting) disorder that causes pain and tenderness throughout the body, as well as fatigue and trouble sleeping. Scientists do not fully understand what causes it, but people with the disorder have an increased sensitivity to pain. There is no cure for fibromyalgia, but healthcare providers can help manage and treat the symptoms. Treatment typically involves a combination of exercise or other movement therapy, psychological and behavioural therapy and medication.

Who can get fibromyalgia?

Anyone can get fibromyalgia, but more women get it than men. It can affect people of any age, but it usually starts in middle age and the chance of getting it increases as you get older. It occurs in people of all communities and backgrounds. If you have other diseases – especially rheumatic diseases, such as arthritis, mood disorders or conditions that cause pain – you may be more likely to get fibromyalgia. These diseases include:

- rheumatoid arthritis
- systemic lupus erythematosus (an immune system disease, commonly called lupus)
- ankylosing spondylitis (a type of arthritis affecting the spine)
- osteoarthritis
- depression or anxiety
- chronic back pain
- irritable bowel syndrome.

Fibromyalgia tends to run in families, and some scientists believe that certain genes could make you more likely to develop it. However, the disorder also occurs in people with no family history of the disorder.

Symptoms of fibromyalgia

The main symptoms of fibromyalgia are:

- chronic, widespread pain throughout the body or in multiple areas; pain is often felt in the arms, legs, head, chest, abdomen, back and buttocks; people often describe it as an aching, burning or throbbing sensation
- fatigue or an overwhelming feeling of exhaustion
- trouble sleeping.

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Other symptoms may include:

- muscle and joint stiffness
- tenderness to touch
- numbness or tingling in the arms and legs
- problems concentrating, thinking clearly and memory (sometimes called 'fibro fog')
- increased sensitivity to light, noise, odours and temperature
- digestive issues, such as bloating or constipation.

Causes of fibromyalgia

The cause of fibromyalgia is not known, but studies show that people with the disorder have an increased sensitivity to pain and they feel pain when others do not. Brain imaging studies and other research have uncovered evidence of altered signalling in neural pathways that transmit and receive pain in people with fibromyalgia. These changes may also contribute to the fatigue, sleep troubles and 'fibro fog' issues that many people with the disorder experience.

Researchers believe that environmental (non-genetic) factors also play a role in a person's risk of developing the disorder. These environmental triggers may include having a disease that causes pain, such as rheumatoid arthritis, or mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression.

Combating fatigue

Persistent fatigue is one of the most troubling symptoms of fibromyalgia. The following strategies may lead to improved sleep and help you feel more rested:

- Create a relaxing sleep environment and establish a sleep routine.
- Go to sleep and get up at the same time every day.
- Reserve your bed for sleeping. Watching TV, reading or using a laptop or phone in bed can keep you awake.
- Keep your bedroom comfortable. Try to keep your bedroom dark, quiet and cool.
- Avoid stimulants like caffeine and nicotine and limit alcohol intake.
- Wind down before bed. Avoid working or exercising close to bedtime. Try some relaxing activities that get you ready for sleep, such as listening to soft music, meditating or taking a warm bath.
- Pace yourself during the day. You may not be able to do all the things you once did or not in the same amount of time. Try not to use up all your energy each day, because doing too much can make your symptoms worse.

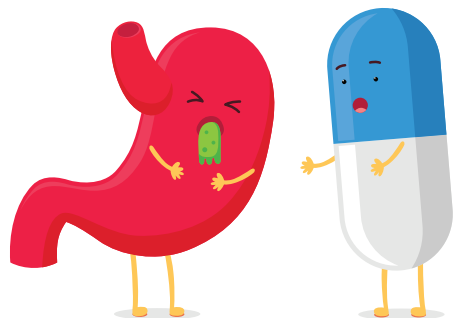
Source: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Preventing indigestion

Indigestion is discomfort in the upper abdomen or chest. It is often linked to nausea, belching or bloating. Most often the condition is linked to a number of unhealthy lifestyle factors. These factors can result in poor digestion.

To help prevent indigestion:

- avoid overeating
- eat slowly and regularly
- avoid greasy, high-fat foods
- limit spicy foods
- do not smoke
- drink coffee, alcohol and caffeinated beverages in moderation
- maintain a healthy weight
- if possible, exercise regularly.



Dry eye

What is dry eye?

Dry eye happens when your eyes don't make enough tears to stay wet or when your tear ducts don't work correctly. This can make your eyes feel uncomfortable and may in some cases even cause vision problems.

What are the symptoms of dry eye?

- A scratchy or gritty feeling, like there's something in your eye
- Stinging or burning feelings in your eye
- Red eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Blurry vision

Risk factors of dry eye

The risk factors are divided into two groups, namely non-modifiable and modifiable risk factors.

Non-modifiable factors

- **Age:** Mostly people who are 50 years of age or older
- **Gender:** Mostly women
- **Meibomian gland dysfunction:** When the Meibomian glands – tiny oil glands that line the margin of the eyelids – do not secrete enough oils into the tears
- **Connective tissue diseases:** Such as rheumatoid arthritis
- **Sjögren syndrome:** An immune disorder that causes insufficient moisture production in certain areas of the body

Modifiable factors

- Computer use
- Wearing contact lenses
- Hormone replacement therapy
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation
- Environmental factors, such as pollution, low humidity and sick building syndrome
- Medication, such as antihistamines, antidepressants, anxiolytics and isotretinoin.



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What is the treatment for dry eye?

Treatment for dry eye usually depends on what is causing your symptoms. There are a few different types of treatment that can ease your symptoms and help keep your eyes healthy:

- over-the-counter eye drops
- prescription medicines
- lifestyle changes
- tear duct plugs
- surgery.

Preventing dry eye

If you experience dry eyes, pay attention to the situations that are most likely to cause your symptoms. You can help prevent symptoms of dry eyes in the following ways:

- Try to avoid smoke, wind and air conditioning.
- Use a humidifier to keep the air in your home from getting too dry.
- Limit screen time and take breaks from staring at screens.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses when you're outside.
- Drink plenty of water; aim for eight to 10 glasses every day.
- Get enough sleep – about seven to eight hours a night.

Snacking affects your dental health

For optimal dental health, it's recommended that you limit eating and drinking between meals.

We all snack from time to time, but unfortunately many people choose food such as sweets and chips for snacks – all food that harm teeth by promoting tooth decay. If you snack, make it a nutritious choice such as cheese, yoghurt, fruit, vegetables or nuts for your overall health and the health of your teeth.

Drinking plenty of water between meals is also great – not just for your general health, but also for helping to flush away food from teeth and gums between brushing.



Brush gently to avoid toothbrush abrasion



Sometimes even your best intentions may cause damage to your teeth. Toothbrush abrasion is a type of dental damage caused by brushing too hard or using a toothbrush with hard bristles.

One of the benefit exclusions* that apply to your dental benefit is the repair of teeth damaged due to toothbrush abrasion. Since repairing this kind of damage is not covered, you will be liable for the total cost of such services. It is therefore important to understand what toothbrush abrasion is and how to prevent it.

Improper brushing technique, such as scrubbing back and forth, and toothpaste that is designed to scrub away stains and plaque, especially whitening types, can make the problem worse. Over time, this can wear away the enamel, especially near the gumline, and lead to gums pulling away from teeth and tooth sensitivity. The damage often appears as notches or grooves on the sides of the teeth.

How to prevent toothbrush abrasion

- Wait 30 minutes to an hour before you brush your teeth after having food or drinks that contain a lot of acid or sugar. This includes soft drinks or sports drinks, citrus fruit or juices and sour jelly sweets. Even something that seems healthy, like milk, contains natural sugar. The acid in these items can soften the enamel. While you wait, your saliva washes away the acid and the enamel hardens again.
- Brush your teeth with gentle fluoride toothpaste for two minutes every morning and every night.
- Use a small- to medium-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Brush gently in small, circular motions.
- Switching to a toothpaste designed for sensitive teeth can also help protect enamel.

* The Transmed Guardian benefit information is also published on the DENIS website at www.denis.co.za.

Source: DENIS



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Important contact details



Who to call to get in touch with the Fund

Services	Contact numbers
Customer service department (general queries)	0800 110 268
Chronic medication application	0800 122 263
Hospital and major medical pre-authorisation	0800 225 151
Optical services (PPN)	0861 103 529
Dental services (DENIS)	0860 104 941
HIV/AIDS	0860 109 793
Ambulance authorisation	0800 115 750
Fraud hotline	0800 000 436
WhatsApp	031 574 3913

Important email addresses

Services	Email addresses
Enquiries	enquiries@transmed.co.za
Banking details and membership	membership@transmed.co.za
Compliments	compliments@transmed.co.za
Complaints	complaints@transmed.co.za
Appeals	appeals@transmed.co.za
Claims	claims@transmed.co.za
Ex gratia	exgratia@transmed.co.za
Suggestions	suggestions@transmed.co.za

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