

rans care



transmed
MEDICAL FUND

FOURTH EDITION OF 2024



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Welcome to the final edition of TransCare for 2024

Principal Officer's note



**Petrus
Wassermann**
Principal Officer

Welcome to the final edition of TransCare for 2024.

With summer in full swing, our bodies face an increased risk of dehydration. We urge our members to stay hydrated this summer.

In this edition, we discuss colon cancer and cerebrovascular disease. We also look at ways to stay hydrated and provide some suggestions on maintaining mental well-being.

Once again, we highlight the importance of ensuring that we have your updated personal contact details. If any of your personal contact details have changed, please contact the customer service department on **0800 110 268** or send an email to **membership@transmed.co.za** to update your personal information. Please include your membership number on all correspondence to the Fund.

I sincerely hope you 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**.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Transmed Medical Fund, to wish you a pleasant festive season.

Yours in good health

Petrus Wassermann
Principal Officer

Colon cancer

Colon cancer is a growth of cells that begins in a part of the large intestine called the colon. The colon is the first and longest part of the large intestine, which is the last part of the digestive system. The digestive system breaks down food for the body to use.

Colon cancer typically affects older adults, though it can happen at any age. It usually begins as small clumps of cells called polyps that form inside the colon. Polyps generally aren't cancerous, but some can turn into colon cancer over time. Polyps often don't cause symptoms. For this reason, doctors recommend regular screening tests to look for polyps in the colon. Finding and removing polyps helps prevent colon cancer.

If colon cancer develops, many forms of treatment can help control it. Treatment includes surgery, radiation therapy and medicines, such as chemotherapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy.

Colon cancer is sometimes called colorectal cancer. This term is used to describe a combination of colon cancer and rectal cancer, which begins in the rectum.

What are the symptoms of colon cancer?

You might not experience colon cancer symptoms at all, especially in the early stages.

If you do experience symptoms of colon cancer, they may include:

- constipation
- diarrhoea
- blood in the stool
- changes in stool colour
- changes in stool shape, such as narrowed stool
- bleeding from the rectum
- unintentional weight loss
- abdominal pain
- excessive fatigue
- the feeling that your bowel won't completely empty (tenesmus).

What causes colon cancer?

The exact causes of colon cancer are still unknown, but researchers have identified several factors that may increase your risk of developing colon cancer.

Genetics

Colon cancer may be caused by genetic mutations that can either be inherited or acquired. These mutations don't guarantee you'll develop colon cancer, but they do increase your chances.

Some genetic conditions associated with colon cancer include:

- familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP)
- Gardner's syndrome
- Lynch syndrome
- cystic fibrosis.

Some mutations may cause abnormal cells to accumulate in the colon lining, forming polyps. These are small, benign growths. However, untreated polyps can become cancerous. Removing these growths through surgery can be a preventative measure.

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Risk factors you can't change

Some factors that increase your risk of developing colon cancer can't be changed. For instance, your age, ethnicity and family health history can all have an impact on your risk of colon cancer.

Risk factors you can't control include:

- being over the age of 50 years
- a history of colon polyps
- a history of bowel diseases
- a family history of colorectal cancer
- having certain genetic syndromes, such as FAP
- having certain health conditions, such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
- having previously had certain medical procedures, such as abdominal radiation and gallbladder removal.

Can colon cancer be prevented?

Certain risk factors for colon cancer, such as family history and age, aren't preventable.

However, certain lifestyle factors that may contribute to colon cancer are preventable and changing them might help lower your overall risk of developing this disease.

You can reduce your risk by:

- avoiding processed meats, such as hot dog and deli meats
- eating more plant-based foods
- decreasing dietary fat and red meat
- exercising daily if possible
- maintaining a moderate weight, especially if you are obese or overweight
- quitting smoking if you smoke
- reducing alcohol consumption if you drink
- decreasing stress
- managing pre-existing diabetes.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/colon-cancer>

Cerebrovascular disease

Cerebrovascular disease refers to a **group of conditions that affect blood flow and the blood vessels in the brain**. Problems with blood flow may occur from blood vessels narrowing (stenosis), clot formation (thrombosis), artery blockage (embolism) or blood vessel rupture (haemorrhage).

Which conditions fall under cerebrovascular disease?

- **Stroke:** Stroke is the most common type of cerebrovascular disease. The hallmark of a stroke is the *permanent* loss of sensation or motor function. The two general categories of strokes are haemorrhagic (bleeding into the brain) or ischaemic (insufficient blood flow to the brain).
- **Transient ischaemic attack (TIA):** TIA is like a stroke, but the *symptoms clear up completely within 24 hours*. TIA is sometimes referred to as a 'mini stroke'.
- **Aneurysms of blood vessels supplying the brain:** An aneurysm is caused by a weakening of the artery wall, resulting in a bulge in the blood vessel.
- **Vascular malformations:** This refers to abnormalities present in arteries or veins.
- **Vascular dementia:** This condition refers to cognitive impairment that is usually permanent.
- **Subarachnoid haemorrhage:** This term is used to describe blood leaking out of a blood vessel onto the brain's surface.

Symptoms of cerebrovascular disease

The symptoms of cerebrovascular disease may differ slightly depending on the specific condition you have. However, stroke is the most common presentation of cerebrovascular diseases.

Strokes are characterised by the sudden onset of symptoms and survival and functional outcomes are time sensitive.

To help you identify the warning signs of a stroke, use the acronym **FAST**:

- **Facial droop:** One side of the face may appear 'droopy' or the person may be unable to smile.
- **Arm weakness:** The person is unable to raise an arm above his or her head.
- **Speech difficulty:** The person has slurred speech, is unable to find words or is unable to understand what people are saying.
- **Time to call emergency services:** Immediately seek medical attention if even one of these symptoms is present.

Other symptoms of a TIA or stroke include:

- severe headache
- vertigo or dizziness
- vomiting and nausea
- memory loss or confusion
- numbness and tingling in the arm, leg or face, usually on only one side of the body
- slurred speech
- vision problems
- difficulty or inability to walk.

Treatment

The specific treatment depends on the type of cerebrovascular disease that you have. However, the treatment centres on improving your brain's blood flow. Based on the cause of the loss of blood flow, your doctor will choose among several treatment options. The most effective treatment for you will depend on the extent of the loss of blood flow.

Preventing cerebrovascular disease

Although cerebrovascular disease is a common medical condition, there are things you can do to help prevent it, such as the following to reduce the risk of stroke:

- Do not smoke or stop if you do.
- Follow a healthy, balanced diet.
- Control your high blood pressure.
- Lower your blood cholesterol.
- Exercise if possible.
- Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Be aware of the risks of any type of hormone replacement therapy.
- Visit your doctor regularly for annual checkups.
- Lower your stress levels.
- Reduce the amount of alcohol you drink.

Preventing cerebrovascular disease is always the best goal.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/cerebrovascular-disease>





Six ways to stay hydrated

Every cell, tissue, joint and organ in your body needs water to work. Your body loses water when you sweat, breathe and go to the bathroom.

To make sure your body has all the water it needs to function properly, it is important to drink enough water every day to replace the water you lose.

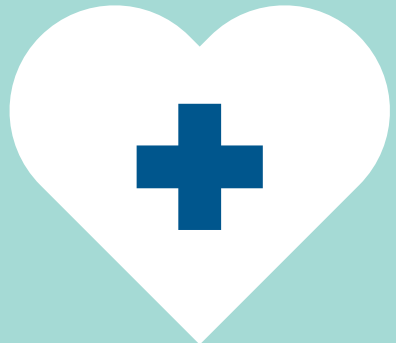
1. Eat food that is high in water content, such as lettuce, melons, berries and apples.
2. Avoid food and drinks that can make you dehydrated, such as processed food and soft drinks.
3. Get a water bottle that you enjoy using.
4. If you find the taste of water boring, add a twist of natural fruit juice or fresh herbs.
5. Use reminders to encourage you to drink more water.
6. Carry a water bottle with you so that you can stay hydrated while on the road.

Mental well-being

Mental well-being describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental well-being is dynamic: it can change from moment to moment, month to month or year to year.

Here are some tips for maintaining mental well-being:

- Talk about your feelings.
- Keep active.
- Eat healthy meals and drink water.
- Use alcohol sensibly.
- Keep in touch.
- Ask for help.
- Take a break.
- Do something you are good at.
- Accept who you are.
- Care for others.



When and how are **contributions payable?**

Transmed Medical Fund collects monthly membership contributions in arrears. Your employer or pension fund will collect your monthly contribution from your month-end remuneration and pay it over to Transmed. This means, for example, that your December contribution will be deducted from your December salary or pension.

If your contribution is received via automatic clearing bureau (ACB) deduction from your bank account, your contribution is deducted during the first week of the month. This means, for example, that the contribution recovered during the first week of December will be your contribution for November.

In the event of the termination of your membership, your last contribution is payable at the end of your last month of membership.

Please note that although the payment of your contribution may be facilitated by your employer or pension fund, you remain ultimately responsible for the payment of any contribution due to the Fund.



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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	0860 005 037

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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