

rans care



transmed
MEDICAL FUND

FOURTH EDITION OF 2023

Welcome to the
latest edition of
TransCare for
2023

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Principal Officer's note



Petrus
Wassermann
Principal Officer

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As we approach summer, the following tips can help you to stay healthy: Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, protect the skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays with sunscreen and protective clothing, avoid prolonged exposure to high temperatures, take steps to prevent insect bites and stings, eat healthy food, wear protective eyewear to protect your vision from the harsh sunlight and stay cool.

In this edition we cover non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which is a range of conditions caused by a build-up of fat in the liver. Also included is an article on atopic dermatitis (eczema), which is a condition that causes dry, itchy and inflamed skin.

The Transmed Member Trustee election has been concluded and we are very happy to announce the results. Mr J Groenewald and Mr L Ngaka were elected unopposed. The Trustees play a pivotal role in the management of the Fund and we wish them every success in their new positions.

To ensure that you receive communication from the Fund, please update your personal contact details with Transmed.

As this is our last edition for 2023, we wish you and your family a healthy, happy festive season. May the new year be filled with blessings, happiness, joy and health.

Should you wish to give us feedback, please do not hesitate to do so by sending an email to suggestions@transmed.co.za.

Warm regards

Petrus Wassermann
Principal Officer



Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is an umbrella term for a range of liver conditions affecting people who drink little to no alcohol. As the name implies, the main characteristic of NAFLD is too much fat stored in liver cells.

Some individuals with NAFLD can develop non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), an aggressive form of fatty liver disease, which is marked by liver inflammation and may progress to advanced scarring (cirrhosis) and liver failure. This damage is similar to the damage caused by heavy alcohol use.

Symptoms

NAFLD usually causes no signs and symptoms. When it does, they may include:

- fatigue
- pain or discomfort in the upper right abdomen.

Possible signs and symptoms of NASH and advanced scarring (cirrhosis) include:

- abdominal swelling (ascites)
- enlarged blood vessels just beneath the skin's surface
- enlarged spleen
- red palms
- yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice).

An elderly man with a white beard and a woman are smiling and eating together. The man is holding a slice of green apple. The woman is holding a fork with a piece of food. They are in a kitchen setting with a fruit basket in the foreground.

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

CONTINUES>>

Causes

Experts don't know exactly why some people accumulate fat in the liver while others do not. Similarly, there is limited understanding of why some fatty livers develop inflammation that progresses to cirrhosis.

NAFLD and NASH are both linked to the following:

- being overweight or obese
- insulin resistance, in which your cells don't take up sugar in response to the hormone insulin
- high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia), indicating prediabetes or type 2 diabetes
- high levels of fat, particularly triglycerides, in the blood.

These combined health problems appear to promote the deposit of fat in the liver. For some people, this excess fat acts as a toxin to liver cells, causing liver inflammation and NASH, which may lead to a buildup of scar tissue in the liver.



Choose a healthy diet. Choose a healthy, plant-based diet that's rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grain and healthy fat.'

Risk factors

A wide range of diseases and conditions can increase your risk of NAFLD, including:

- high cholesterol
- high levels of triglycerides in the blood
- metabolic syndrome
- obesity, particularly when fat is concentrated in the abdomen
- polycystic ovary syndrome
- sleep apnoea
- type 2 diabetes
- underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism)
- underactive pituitary gland (hypopituitarism).

NASH is more likely in these groups:

- older people
- people with diabetes
- people with body fat concentrated in the abdomen.

Prevention

To reduce your risk of NAFLD:

- **Choose a healthy diet.** Choose a healthy, plant-based diet that's rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grain and healthy fat.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** If you are overweight or obese, reduce the number of calories you take in each day and get more exercise. If you have a healthy weight, work to maintain it by choosing a healthy diet and exercising, if possible.
- **Exercise.** If possible, exercise.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/nonalcoholic-fatty-liver-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20354567>



ATOPIC DERMATITIS (ECZEMA)

Atopic dermatitis (eczema) is a condition that causes dry, itchy and inflamed skin. It's common in young children, but can occur at any age.

Atopic dermatitis is long-lasting (chronic) and tends to flare up sometimes. It can be irritating, but it's not contagious.

People with atopic dermatitis are at risk of developing food allergies, hay fever and asthma.

Moisturising regularly and following other skincare habits can relieve itching and prevent new outbreaks (flare-ups). Treatment may also include medicated ointments or creams.



Symptoms

Eczema symptoms can appear anywhere on the body and vary widely from person to person. They may include:

- dry, cracked skin
- itchiness (pruritus)
- rash on swollen skin that varies in colour, depending on your skin colour
- small, raised bumps
- oozing and crusting
- thickened skin
- darkening of the skin around the eyes
- raw, sensitive skin from scratching.

Atopic dermatitis often begins before the age of five and may continue into the teen and adult years. For some people, it flares up and then clears up for a time, even for several years.



ATOPIC DERMATITIS (ECZEMA)

Causes

In some people, atopic dermatitis is related to a gene variation that affects the skin's ability to provide protection. With a weak barrier function, the skin is less able to retain moisture and protect against bacteria, irritants, allergens and environmental factors — such as tobacco smoke.

In other people, atopic dermatitis is caused by too much of the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* on the skin. This displaces helpful bacteria and disrupts the skin's barrier function.

A weak skin barrier function might also trigger an immune system response that causes inflamed skin and other symptoms.

Atopic dermatitis is one of several types of dermatitis. Other common types are contact dermatitis (rash caused by an allergic reaction) and seborrheic dermatitis (dandruff). Dermatitis isn't contagious.

Risk factors

The main risk factor for atopic dermatitis is having had atopic dermatitis, allergies, hay fever or asthma in the past. Having family members with these conditions also increases your risk.



Take a daily bath or shower. Use warm, rather than hot, water and limit your bath or shower to about 10 minutes.'

Prevention

Developing a basic skin care routine may help prevent atopic dermatitis flare-ups. The following tips may help reduce the drying effects of bathing:

- **Moisturise your skin at least twice a day.** Creams, ointments, shea butter and lotions seal in moisture. Choose a product or products that work well for you. Ideally, the best one for you will be safe, effective, affordable and unscented.
- **Take a daily bath or shower.** Use warm, rather than hot, water and limit your bath or shower to about 10 minutes.
- **Use a gentle cleanser that does not contain soap.** Choose a cleanser that's free of dyes, alcohols and fragrance. For people of any age, deodorant soaps and antibacterial soaps can remove too much of the skin's natural oils and dry the skin. Don't scrub the skin with a washcloth or loofah.
- **Pat dry.** After bathing, gently pat the skin with a soft towel. Apply moisturiser while your skin is still damp (within three minutes).



ATOPIC DERMATITIS (ECZEMA)

The triggers for atopic dermatitis vary widely from person to person. Try to identify and avoid irritants that trigger atopic dermatitis. In general, avoid anything that causes an itch because scratching often triggers a flare-up.

Common triggers for atopic dermatitis include:

- rough wool fabric
- dry skin
- skin infection
- heat and sweat
- stress
- cleaning products
- dust mites and pet dander
- mold
- pollen
- smoke from tobacco
- cold and dry air
- fragrances
- other irritating chemicals.

Once you understand what triggers your atopic dermatitis, talk with your healthcare provider about how to manage your symptoms and prevent flare-ups.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atopic-dermatitis-eczema/symptoms-causes/syc-20353273>



Protect your Fund and report fraud

The Fund would like to encourage members to report fraud by contacting the fraud hotline. This service is operated independently from the Fund. Members and service providers can report any incidence of fraud by contacting **0800 000 436**.

Please rest assured that your call will remain anonymous.

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 address
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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