

Trans health



transmed
MEDICAL FUND

FOURTH EDITION OF 2024

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Welcome to the final edition of TransHealth for 2024

Principal Officer's note



Petrus Wassermann
Principal Officer

Welcome to the final edition of TransHealth for 2024.

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

In this edition, we discuss colon cancer and the different types of lymphoma. We also look at ways to stay hydrated, provide some suggestions on maintaining mental well-being and look at the impact oral health has on your body.

With regard to our competition, please read the newsletter carefully to answer the six questions about the topics in this edition correctly. I would also like to congratulate our winners of the last competition.

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 450 010** 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

Lymphoma

Lymphoma is a type of cancer originating in the lymphatic system, a crucial part of the immune system.

The lymphatic system, which is a network of delicate tubes throughout the body, drains fluid (called lymph) that has leaked from the blood vessels into the tissues and empties it back into the bloodstream via the lymph nodes.

The lymph nodes and other lymphatic structures like the spleen and thymus hold special white blood cells called lymphocytes that can start to multiply uncontrollably, forming tumours.

There are two main types, namely Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is characterised by Reed-Sternberg cells, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL), which has various subtypes.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is cancer of the lymphoid tissue, which includes the lymph nodes, spleen and other organs of the immune system.

Symptoms of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Symptoms depend on what area of the body is affected by the cancer and how fast the cancer is growing.

Symptoms may include:

- night sweats
- itching
- swollen lymph nodes in the neck, underarms, groin or other areas
- headaches, concentration problems, personality changes or seizures if the cancer affects the brain
- fever and chills
- weight loss
- abdominal pain or swelling, which may lead to loss of appetite, constipation, nausea and vomiting
- coughing or shortness of breath if the cancer affects the thymus gland or lymph nodes in the chest.

Risk factors

Factors that may increase the risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma include:

- Age – more common in older people
- Gender – more common in men
- Family history
- Autoimmune disorders
- Overexposure to industrial and agricultural chemicals
- Suffering from diseases or conditions affecting the immune system, such as HIV/AIDS and having had an organ transplant.

Hodgkin's lymphoma

Hodgkin's lymphoma is a cancer of lymph tissue found in the lymph nodes, spleen, liver, bone marrow and other sites.

Symptoms of Hodgkin's lymphoma

- Fatigue
- Fever and chills that come and go
- Itching all over the body that cannot be explained
- Loss of appetite
- Soaking night sweats
- Painless swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck, armpits or groin (swollen glands)
- Weight loss that cannot be explained

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Other symptoms

- Coughing, chest pains or breathing problems if there are swollen lymph nodes in the chest
- Excessive sweating
- Pain or feeling of fullness below the ribs due to swollen spleen or liver
- Pain in lymph nodes after drinking alcohol
- Skin blushing or flushing

Risk factors

Factors that may increase the risk of Hodgkin's lymphoma:

- **Age:** Hodgkin's lymphoma is most often diagnosed in people between the ages of 15 and 35, as well as those older than 55.
- **A family history of lymphoma:** Anyone with a brother or a sister who has Hodgkin's lymphoma has an increased risk of developing Hodgkin's lymphoma. Studies also show up to a seven-fold increased risk in people with a parent or sibling diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma or with any blood or lymphatic cancer.
- **Gender:** Males are slightly more likely to develop Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- **Past Epstein-Barr infection:** Individuals who have had illnesses caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, such as infectious mononucleosis, are more likely to develop Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- **A weakened immune system:** Having a compromised immune system, such as from HIV/AIDS or from having an organ transplant requiring medication to suppress the immune response, increases the risk of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Sources:

<https://cansa.org.za/files/2023/09/CANSA-Fact-Sheet-on-Hodgkins-Lymphoma-NCR-2019-web-March-2023.pdf>

<https://cansa.org.za/non-hodgkins-lymphoma/>



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 and 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.

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.

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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>



The impact your oral health has on your body

Your oral health plays a bigger role in your overall well-being than you might think. Poor oral hygiene can have consequences far beyond tooth decay (cavities) or gum disease. The mouth is the gateway to your digestive and respiratory systems. Without proper oral care, uncontrolled harmful germs in your mouth can cause infections that might spread to other parts of your body.

The link between oral health and major health issues

Poor oral health has been connected to various health problems, including:

- **Heart health:** Studies have shown that people with severe gum disease are at a significantly higher risk of heart disease. Gum infections, like periodontitis, allow harmful bacteria to enter the bloodstream, leading to inflammation that can increase the likelihood of heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke.
- **Diabetes:** For individuals living with diabetes, oral health is especially important. Diabetics are more prone to infections like gum disease and severe gum disease can, in turn, make it harder to control blood sugar levels.
- **Pregnancy complications:** When you are pregnant, there is extra reason to focus on your oral hygiene routine. Research shows a correlation between pregnancy hormone levels and the severity of gum inflammation. Periodontitis in pregnant women has been linked to complications such as preterm birth, restricted foetal growth, pre-eclampsia and low birth weight.
- **Lung health:** Healthy gums are the key to lowering your risk for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pneumonia. These infections are caused when harmful bacteria associated with periodontal disease is inhaled into the lower respiratory tract.

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- **HIV/AIDS:** People with HIV often have weakened immune systems that may contribute to oral health problems such as gum disease (gingivitis and periodontitis), painful mouth sores, called mucosal lesions, and tooth decay. Many of these problems with the teeth, gums or mouth can be prevented or quickly treated when diagnosed in time.
- **Brain health:** Oral health may have a surprising connection to brain health. Research indicates that gum disease may be a risk factor for cognitive decline, including conditions like Alzheimer's disease. The bacteria from oral infections can spread to the brain, potentially contributing to the development of dementia. Keeping your gums healthy may play an important role in keeping your brain sharp as you age.

The power of prevention: Healthy habits for healthy teeth

Proper oral hygiene, paired with regular dental visits, can protect not only your gums, but also support better overall health. It is recommended that you visit your dental healthcare professional* every six months or at least once a year for a dental check-up and professional cleaning (i.e. scale and polish).

Regular visits to your dental healthcare professional will help prevent the development of tooth decay (caries) or gum disease, as he or she can detect and treat early oral disease before it becomes more serious.

Taking care of your mouth daily is crucial for your overall health. Follow these healthy habits to help prevent the development of tooth decay (caries) or gum disease:

- Make it a habit to rinse your mouth with water after every meal or snack.
- Limit sweets, sugary foods and sugar-filled drinks – make water your main drink.
- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes every morning and every night. Use a small- to medium-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- After brushing your teeth at night, do not eat anything or drink anything other than water before you go to bed.
- Floss to clean between your teeth. Do this once daily or at a minimum three times a week.
- If you smoke or vape, try to quit. Speak to your dentist about smoking cessation options.

SELECT PLAN MEMBERS

Visit a DENIS dental network practice to avoid unexpected payments: Consider going to a dental healthcare professional that is part of the DENIS Dental Network. These practices will not charge you more than the Transmed tariffs for conservative dental treatment. This means that if you have the benefits available for the treatment, you will not have to pay any money out of your own pocket. Go to the DENIS website, www.denis.co.za, and click on *Find a Network Provider* to search for a practice by suburb or phone the DENIS contact centre on **0860 104 941**.

The image features the DENIS logo in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo, there is a photograph of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, both smiling. The girl is wearing a pink sleeveless top, and the boy is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. They are positioned in front of a light blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

denis

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.

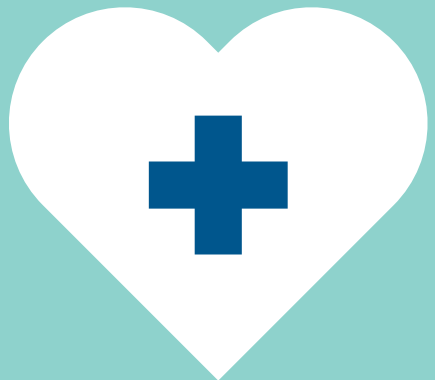


Mental well-being

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 | Link plan | Select and Prime plans |
|--|--|---|
| Customer service department | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 transmed@universal.co.za | 0800 450 010 enquiries@transmed.co.za |
| Membership and contributions | 0800 450 010 | 0800 450 010 |
| Hospital and major medical pre-authorisation | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 | 0800 225 151 |
| Disease programmes | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 | 0800 225 151 |
| Ambulance authorisation | 0800 115 750 | 0800 115 750 |
| HIV/AIDS | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 | 0860 109 793 |
| Dental services | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 | 0860 104 941 (Select plan) 0800 450 010 (Prime plan) |
| Optical services | Universal Healthcare 0861 686 278 | PPN 0861 103 529 (Select plan) 0800 450 010 (Prime plan) |
| Fraud hotline | 0800 000 436 | 0800 000 436 |
| WhatsApp | 0860 005 037 | 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 |
| External service provider for the Link plan (Universal Healthcare) | transmed@universal.co.za |

DISCLAIMER:

The information and articles in this newsletter do not constitute medical advice or a medical claim for any product of any nature whatsoever on behalf of the publisher, Fund, Administrator or the distributor. Consult a qualified healthcare practitioner for diagnosis or treatment of any diseases or medical conditions.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the **WINNERS** of the brainteaser competition from the third edition of TransHealth for 2024.

First prize: Mrs S Pieterse

Second prize: Mr FJ van Zyl

Third prize: Mr JG Mostert

SOLUTION FROM THE PREVIOUS COMPETITION

Missing word: **EMERGENCY**

WIN WITH TRANSMED

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE COMPETITION

We are giving away prizes to the winners of our test your knowledge competition. All you need to do is answer six questions. You will find the answers in this edition of the newsletter. The first correct entry will win R2 000. The second and third correct entries will each win R1 000. Please note that terms and conditions apply.

You may use the following channels to forward your answers:

- **Post:** Test your knowledge competition, PO Box 2269, Bellville 7535
- **Email:** enquiries@transmed.co.za
- **Fax:** 011 381 2041/42

Your entry form must reach Transmed Medical Fund by no later than 31 January 2025.

Question 1: What is the email address for enquiries?

Question 2: Does Transmed collect monthly membership contribution in advance or arrears?

Question 3: What describes your mental state?

Question 4: What is the gateway to your digestive and respiratory systems?

Question 5: Name the two main types of lymphoma.

Question 6: What is the abbreviation for familial adenomatous polyposis?

Full name:

Physical address:

Postal address:

Email address:

Membership number:

Contact phone number:

Terms and conditions

- The competition is only open to Transmed Medical Fund members and their registered dependants.
- Late entries will not be considered for the draw.
- Please note that entries may be posted, faxed or emailed to Transmed.
- Winners will be notified telephonically and their names will be published in the TransHealth magazine. Transmed may require the publication of the photographs of the winners.
- The judges’ decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Entry into the competition signifies acceptance of all rules.