

# Trans health



transmed  
MEDICAL FUND

THIRD EDITION OF 2024



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Welcome to the third edition of TransHealth for 2024

# Principal Officer's note



**Petrus  
Wassermann**  
*Principal Officer*

## Welcome to the third edition of TransHealth for 2024.

In light of Oral Health Month in September, we provide information about practising a daily oral hygiene routine and encourage our members to take care of their oral health.

In this edition, we cover basal cell carcinoma, which is a type of skin cancer. Basal cell carcinoma begins in the basal cells – a type of cell within the skin that produces new skin cells as old ones die off. Basal cell carcinoma often appears as a slightly transparent bump on the skin, though it can take other forms. Basal cell carcinoma occurs most often on areas of the skin that are exposed to the sun.

Since most falls occur in and around the home and can be life-changing, we share some simple precautions to ensure safety and reduce your risk of falling in an article on fall prevention at home.

Transmed hosted its annual general meeting (AGM) in July. 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.

In our regular competition, we ask you to complete the brainteaser by circling the relevant words to find the one that does not appear. All the answers are in this issue. On that note, I would also like to congratulate the winners of the previous TransHealth competition.

If you have an email address and you have not updated the information, please contact the customer service department on **0800 450 010** or send an email to **[membership@transmed.co.za](mailto:membership@transmed.co.za)**. Please include your membership number on all correspondence to the Fund.

We hope that you will take the time to read this 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](mailto:suggestions@transmed.co.za)**.

Happy reading.

Warm regards

**Petrus Wassermann**  
*Principal Officer*

# Basal cell carcinoma

## What is basal cell carcinoma?

Basal cell carcinoma is a type of skin cancer that begins in the basal cells, which produce new skin cells. It often develops on sun-exposed areas and can look like a bump, a lesion or a patch.

## Symptoms

Basal cell carcinoma usually develops on sun-exposed parts of your body, especially your head and neck. Less often, basal cell carcinoma can develop on parts of your body usually protected from the sun, such as the genitals.

Basal cell carcinoma appears as a change in the skin, such as a growth or a sore that won't heal. These changes in the skin (lesions) usually have one of the following characteristics:

- A shiny, skin-coloured bump that's translucent, meaning you can see a bit through the surface. The bump can look pearly white, pink, brown or glossy black. Tiny blood vessels might be visible. The bump may bleed and scab over.
- A brown, black or blue lesion or a lesion with dark spots with a slightly raised, translucent border.
- A flat, scaly patch with a raised edge. Over time, these patches can grow quite large.
- A white, waxy, scar-like lesion without a clearly defined border.

## Causes

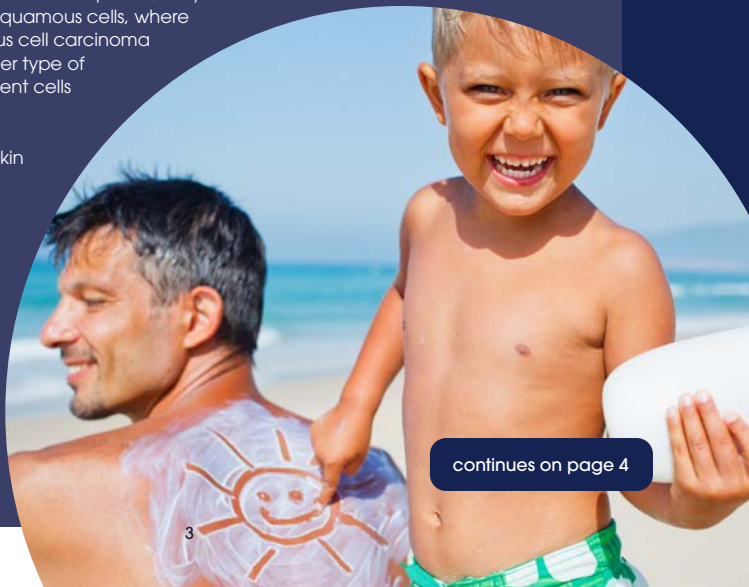
Basal cell carcinoma occurs when one of the skin's basal cells develops a mutation in its DNA.

Basal cells are found at the bottom of the epidermis – the outermost layer of skin. Basal cells produce new skin cells. As new skin cells are produced, they push older cells toward the skin's surface, where the old cells die and fall off.

## Where skin cancer develops

Skin cancer begins in the cells that make up the outer layer (epidermis) of your skin. Basal cell carcinoma begins in the basal cells, which make skin cells that continuously push older cells toward the surface. As new cells move upward, they become flattened skin cells known as squamous cells, where a skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma can occur. Melanoma, another type of skin cancer, arises in the pigment cells (melanocytes).

The process of creating new skin cells is controlled by a basal cell's DNA. The DNA contains the instructions that tell a cell what to do. The mutation tells the basal cell to multiply rapidly and continue growing when it would normally die. Eventually the accumulating abnormal cells may form a cancerous tumour – the lesion that appears on the skin.



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## Ultraviolet light and other causes

Much of the damage to DNA in basal cells is thought to result from ultraviolet (UV) radiation found in sunlight and in commercial tanning lamps and tanning beds. But UV exposure doesn't explain skin cancers that develop on skin not ordinarily exposed to UV radiation. Other factors can contribute to the risk and development of basal cell carcinoma and the exact cause may in some cases not be clear.

## Risk factors

Factors that increase your risk of basal cell carcinoma include:

- **Chronic sun exposure:** A lot of time spent in the sun – or in commercial tanning beds – increases the risk of basal cell carcinoma. The threat is greater if you live in a sunny or high-altitude location, both of which expose you to more UV radiation. Severe sunburns also increase your risk.
- **Radiation therapy:** Radiation therapy to treat acne or other skin conditions may increase the risk of basal cell carcinoma at previous treatment sites on the skin.
- **Fair skin:** The risk of basal cell carcinoma is higher among people who freckle or burn easily or who have very light skin, red or blond hair or light-coloured eyes.
- **Increasing age:** Because basal cell carcinoma often takes decades to develop, the majority of basal cell carcinomas occur in older adults. But it can also affect younger adults and is becoming more common in people in their 20s and 30s.
- **A personal or family history of skin cancer:** If you've had basal cell carcinoma one or more times, you have a good chance of developing it again. If you have a family history of skin cancer, you may have an increased risk of developing basal cell carcinoma.
- **Immune-suppressing drugs:** Taking medication that suppress your immune system, such as anti-rejection drugs used after transplant surgery, significantly increases your risk of skin cancer.
- **Exposure to arsenic:** Arsenic, a toxic metal that's found widely in the environment, increases the risk of basal cell carcinoma and other cancers. Everyone has some exposure to arsenic, because exposure occurs naturally, but some people may have higher exposure if they drink contaminated well water or have a job that involves producing or using arsenic.
- **Inherited syndromes that cause skin cancer:** Certain rare genetic diseases can increase the risk of basal cell carcinoma, including naevoid basal cell carcinoma syndrome, also known as Gorlin-Goltz syndrome, which involves defects in body systems such as the skin, nervous system and eyes, and *xeroderma pigmentosum*, a disorder that causes the skin and tissue covering the eye to be extremely sensitive to UV light.

## Prevention

To reduce your risk of basal cell carcinoma you can:

- avoid the sun during the middle of the day
- wear sunscreen year-round
- wear protective clothing
- avoid tanning beds
- check your skin regularly.

**Source:** <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/basal-cell-carcinoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20354187>





# Prevent falls at home

As we age, the risk of falling increases. Most falls occur in and around the home and can be life-changing. It is important to understand the ways you can protect yourself from falls. Some simple precautions can ensure safety and reduce your risk of falling at home.

The checklist below is a handy reminder about areas of the home where falls commonly occur.

## Stairways

- Make sure all handrails are securely fastened.
- Both sides of the steps should have handrails.

## Floors and rugs

- Make sure all floorboards are even and that rugs, including area rugs, are secured to the floor with tacks, non-skid pads or double-sided tape.
- Use non-skid floor wax.

## Bathroom

- Be sure that you can move safely in the bathroom area and in and out of the tub or shower.
- Remove soap build-up in the tub or shower on a regular basis.
- Place non-slip strips in the bath and shower.
- Install adjustable-height showerheads.
- Mount grab bars on the walls at the toilet, bath and shower with secure reinforcements to prevent the bars from coming loose.
- Secure bathmats with non-slip, double-sided rug tape.

## Kitchen

- Things that you use frequently, such as dishes and food items, should be easy to reach.
- If you must use a step stool, make sure that it has a bar at the top to hold onto.

## Other tips to prevent falls

- Exercise regularly – this keeps your balance ‘in tune’ and bones and muscles strong.
- Maintain good posture – good back care will assist with your posture and balance.
- Walking aids, such as sticks and frames, should be correctly fitted and should ideally not be borrowed from other people.
- Firm-fitting flat and comfortable shoes improve your stability.
- Take extra care on uneven ground.
- Good vision helps you balance – be careful if lighting is poor.
- Be aware of home hazards, such as slippery mats, dangling electrical cords, small pets and tiles.
- Have an emergency plan for falls – know how to summon help if you do have a fall.
- Replace floor coverings that buckle, curl and have holes or frayed edges. Installing mats and carpets with non-skid pads and using abrasive paint will assist in slip-proofing flooring and also reduce foot fatigue.





# Your smile is in your hands:

## Practise a daily oral hygiene routine

Taking care of your oral health is your responsibility. Although 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), it is even more important to practise a good daily oral hygiene routine.

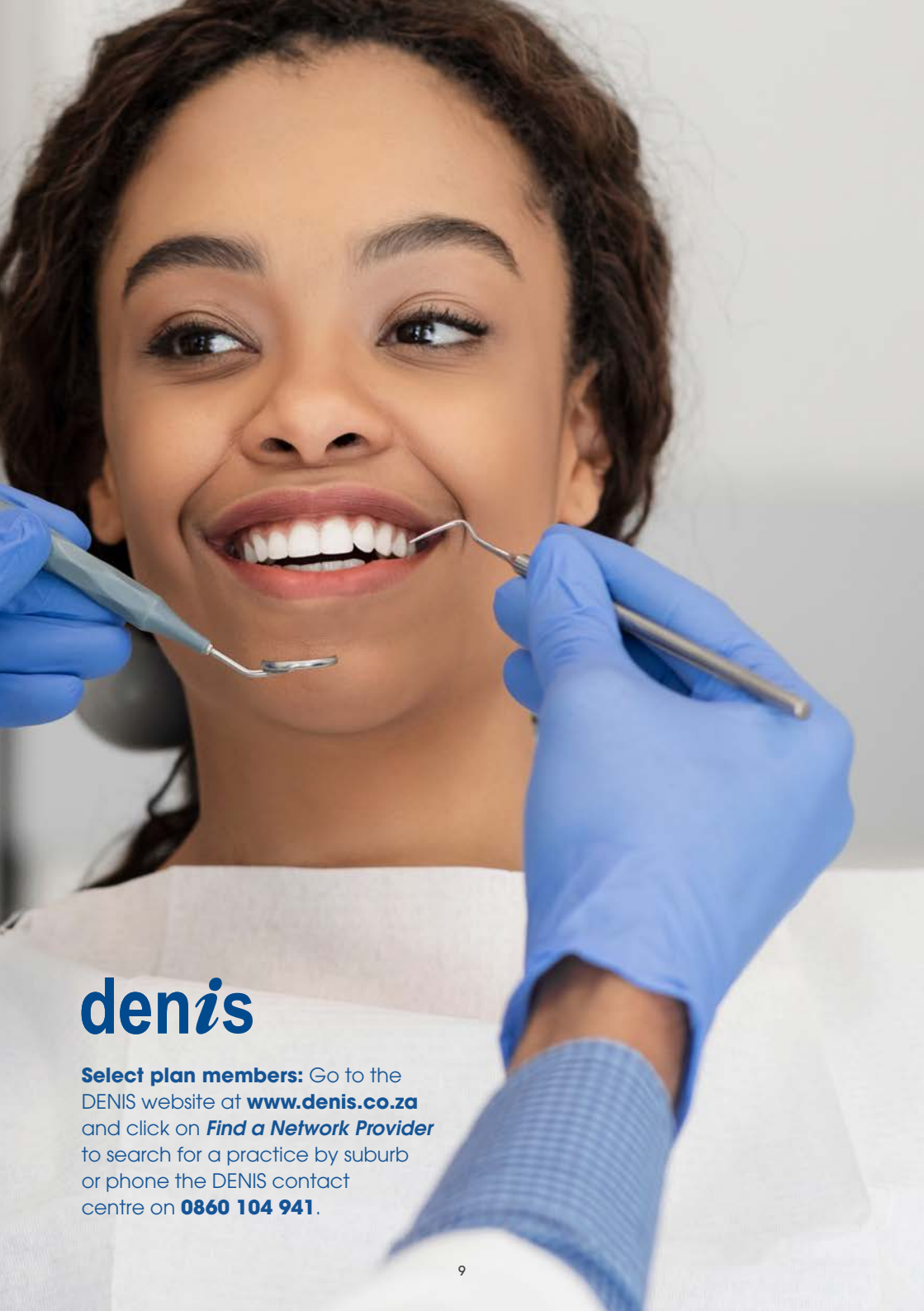
### Follow these healthy habits to help prevent the development of tooth decay (caries) or gum disease:

- Make it a habit to rinse your mouth with water after every meal or snack.
- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes every morning and every night. Use a small to medium-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- When you brush, pay attention to your tongue as well.
- After brushing your teeth at night, do not eat or drink anything other than water before you go to bed. During the day, bacteria and plaque build up on your teeth and gum line. The longer plaque remains on your teeth, the more likely it is to cause cavities. If you brush your teeth before bedtime, it will help to prevent bad breath, gum disease, tooth decay and cavities.
- Keep your toothbrush clean. Rinse your toothbrush after every use and allow it to dry.
- Replace your toothbrush at least once every four months or if the bristles are worn out.
- Floss to clean between your teeth. Do this once daily or a minimum of three times a week.
- Limit sweets, sugary foods and sugar-filled drinks – make water your main drink.
- If you smoke or vape, try to quit. Speak to your dentist about smoking cessation options.

**Select plan members:** Consider going to a dental healthcare professional that is part of the DENIS Dental Network to avoid unexpected payments. 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.

**Source:** DENIS





# denis

**Select plan members:** Go to the DENIS website at [www.denis.co.za](http://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**.



# POSITIVE THINKING

Research has found that positive thinking can aid in stress management and even plays an important role in your overall health and well-being. It can help combat feelings of low self-esteem, improve physical health and help brighten your overall outlook on life.

**Below are some practical tips to achieve positive thinking:**

- Begin each day with a grateful heart.
- Focus on the good things.
- Use positive words when speaking.
- Open yourself up to humour and find humour in bad situations.
- Turn failures into lessons.
- Focus on the present.
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Practise positive self-talk.

## Third-party consent

If you are unable to contact us directly and need someone else to speak to us on your behalf, we will need you to complete a **member consent form** before we can accept instructions from, or share your information with, anyone else. This measure is in place to protect you against people who may try to access your information without authorisation.

You can find the form on the Fund's website at **[www.transmed.co.za](http://www.transmed.co.za)**. Alternatively, contact the customer service department on **0800 450 010** to obtain the form. Complete it electronically or print it out.



# 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 true and false competition from the second edition of TransHealth for 2024.

- First prize:** Ms EJ Sypkens  
**Second prize:** Miss RC Laurence  
**Third prize:** Mr SS Hendrikse

# WIN WITH TRANSMED

## Brainteaser competition

We are giving away prizes to the winners of our brainteaser competition. Simply complete the brainteaser below by circling the relevant words to find the one that does not appear. The words may appear diagonally, vertically and horizontally. Please note that terms and conditions apply.

You may use the following channels to forward your answers:

- **Post:** Brainteaser Competition, PO Box 2269, Bellville 7535
- **Email:** enquiries@transmed.co.za
- **Fax:** 011 381 2041/42

Please write down the missing word along with your contact details in the entry form. Your entry form must reach Transmed Medical Fund by no later than 30 September 2024.

Find the following words in the puzzle:

ABNORMAL	DRUGS	HUMOUR
GRATEFUL	MUSCLES	HAZARDS
RUGS	CONSENT	SITUATIONS
EMERGENCY	BRUSHING	

Full name:

Physical address:

Postal address:

Email address:

Membership number:

Contact phone number:

Missing word:

P	Y	G	V	D	H	Y	S	C	T	T	F	Z	R	C
M	A	T	M	E	U	G	O	O	T	E	R	Y	I	S
Y	G	B	L	N	M	U	W	N	A	T	I	L	S	B
L	M	O	N	T	O	R	V	S	X	R	U	G	L	R
T	U	Z	P	O	U	R	N	E	Y	F	R	E	Y	U
L	S	V	A	R	R	A	T	N	E	U	C	I	Q	S
S	C	M	U	X	F	M	T	T	Q	L	T	S	S	H
I	L	L	E	S	P	E	A	A	U	C	F	W	D	I
X	E	A	F	J	R	R	G	L	E	G	F	E	J	N
Z	S	K	R	B	G	Z	L	F	W	O	J	B	E	G
N	E	H	E	M	C	R	N	S	N	D	Y	N	Z	A
A	K	B	P	C	L	I	H	A	Z	A	R	D	S	G
G	L	R	U	G	S	E	W	T	I	M	P	U	S	O
E	R	Q	S	N	O	N	H	C	S	E	P	W	G	Y
R	S	I	T	U	A	T	I	O	N	S	R	I	A	S

**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, emailed or faxed 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.