



transmed
MEDICAL FUND

TransCare

THIRD EDITION OF 2025



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Principal Officer's note



Welcome to the third edition of **TransCare** for 2025.

We have pleasure in presenting the third edition of TransCare for 2025 and trust that you found the previous edition relevant and informative.

With winter behind us, we would like to wish you and your family a joyous spring.

Heart Awareness Month and Eye Care Awareness Month are both observed in September and in this edition we focus on these two health awareness themes.

Transmed hosted its Annual General Meeting in August 2025. Thank you to all the members who made an effort to attend.

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.

Yours in good health

Petrus Wassermann

Principal Officer



Sleep disorders and cardiovascular disease

Getting enough quality sleep is an essential component of good heart and brain health. Sleep disorders cause sleep disruptions, make it difficult to get the rest you need to stay healthy and have been linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

There are more than 80 different types of sleep disorders. The most common sleep disorders include insomnia, narcolepsy, restless legs syndrome and sleep apnoea.

Research highlights how sleep disorders and poor sleep can negatively affect your heart health:

- Poor sleep can contribute to major cardiovascular disease risk factors, including obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Insufficient or irregular sleep can negatively influence diet, stress levels and other lifestyle factors that can raise the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Excessive daytime sleepiness – a symptom of many sleep disorders and known as hypersomnia in its severest form – can lead to a greater risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Sleep deprivation and sleep disorders have also been linked to increased inflammation in the body, which can further elevate your risk of cardiovascular issues.
- Poor sleep and sleep disorders can contribute to depression and other mental health problems, which may also harm your heart health.

The most common sleep disorders

Insomnia

Insomnia is one of the most common sleep disorders. It affects your ability to fall asleep, stay asleep or get restful sleep. People with insomnia can experience excessive daytime sleepiness as a result of sleep difficulties, which can make it difficult to function throughout the day. Insomnia can also affect memory and cognitive skills. Short-term insomnia may be caused by stress or life changes. Chronic insomnia occurs when you experience symptoms at least three nights a week for at least three months.

Symptoms of insomnia include:

- difficulty falling asleep
- difficulty staying asleep
- poor sleep quality
- daytime sleepiness and low energy
- trouble with concentration, focus and memory
- increased risk of depression, anxiety and irritability.

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a chronic, debilitating sleep disorder characterised by excessive daytime sleepiness and an inability to regulate sleep-wake cycles normally. If you have narcolepsy, you may experience 'sleep attacks' where you unintentionally fall asleep for short periods despite trying to stay awake. These sleep attacks can occur at inappropriate or potentially dangerous times, such as during daily activities like walking, eating or driving.

There is no cure for narcolepsy and it is a lifelong condition, but medication and lifestyle adaptations can help you manage it.

Symptoms of narcolepsy include:

- excessive daytime sleepiness
- episodes of irresistible sleepiness (called 'sleep attacks')
- difficulty staying awake
- frequent nighttime awakenings
- hallucinations
- being awake, but unable to move (sleep paralysis)
- sudden muscle weakness or loss of muscle control (cataplexy).

Restless legs syndrome

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is a neurological disorder that causes your legs to feel uncomfortable or unsettled. It can feel like there's a 'creeping' sensation in your legs and you may feel an irresistible urge to move them. RLS makes it difficult to sleep, because symptoms are often the worst at night and when you're trying to rest. It can also wake you up and make it hard to fall back asleep.

There is no cure, but treatment is available that can help you manage the symptoms.

Symptoms of RLS include:

- an irresistible urge to move your legs
- discomfort in your legs; this may include aching, creeping, itching, throbbing and other painful or uncomfortable sensations
- difficulty falling asleep, as symptoms often occur at night or during rest
- difficulty staying asleep
- fatigue and daytime sleepiness
- problems with memory, focus and concentration
- mood swings
- depression and anxiety.

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Sleep apnoea

Sleep apnoea is a condition that affects your breathing during sleep. It causes your breathing to stop and restart and can make it difficult for your body to get enough oxygen. Episodes of disrupted breathing typically last at least 10 seconds and occur frequently throughout the night.

There are two main types of sleep apnoea:

- **Obstructed sleep apnoea** occurs when the soft tissue in your throat relaxes and makes it difficult to breathe.
- **Central sleep apnoea** happens when your brain has trouble regulating your breathing.

Symptoms of sleep apnoea include:

- irregular breathing during sleep
- loud snoring or gasping
- excessive daytime sleepiness
- morning headaches
- problems with concentration and memory
- mood or behavioural changes, including irritability
- anxiety or depression.

The recommended amount of sleep is between seven and nine hours a night.

Improve your sleep quality – improve your heart health.

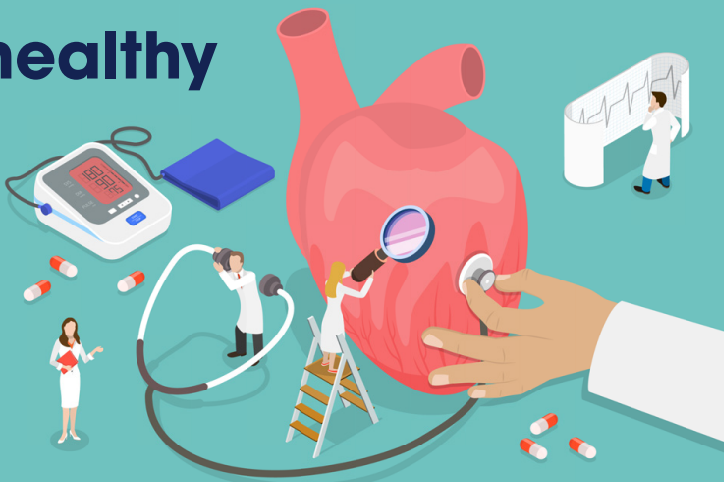
Source:

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/sleep-disorders/sleep-and-heart-health>

Be heart-healthy

Here are some tips that can help you to improve your heart health:

- Avoid smoking.
- Cut down on salt.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Be physically active.
- Monitor blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol.
- Manage your stress levels.
- Maintain a healthy weight.



Important notice!

Authorisations: Certain benefits require pre-authorisation before treatment is received. These are detailed in your **benefits guide**.

Twitching eyes

What is eye twitching?

Eye twitching is a common eye condition that usually comes and goes on its own. It occurs when muscles in one or both of your eyelids spasm or blink involuntarily.

Symptoms of eye twitching

Eyelid spasms may have several symptoms, but the most common one is involuntary twitching of the eyelid or blinking. This anxiety-related twitching may be mild or severe and can affect one or both eyes. The symptoms below may also occur at the same time as an eyelid twitch:

- eye spasms or muscle contractions
- light sensitivity
- pain or discomfort around the eye
- dry eyes
- blurred vision.

Some people may experience eye twitching without any accompanying symptoms. The duration of eye twitching can vary depending on the underlying cause. In some cases, twitching lasts only for a few minutes, while in others it may persist for days or even weeks. In most instances, twitching stops on its own; however, if it continues or becomes severe, it may be beneficial to consult a healthcare provider.

Causes of eye twitching

Several physical and emotional factors may cause eye twitching, including the following:

- **Fatigue:** When you are tired, your muscles may also become fatigued, leading to twitching.
- **Caffeine and alcohol consumption:** Both are stimulants that can cause facial and eye muscles to become tense, leading to twitching.
- **Stress:** Eye twitching is often associated with stress and anxiety, which may cause facial tension.



- **Eye strain:** Intense focusing on a computer screen or close-up tasks can strain the eyes and lead to twitching.
- **Nutritional deficiencies:** A lack of certain vitamins and minerals can cause eye twitches.
- **Dry eyes:** Dry eyes can be caused by environmental factors, such as air conditioning, computer use and contact lenses.
- **Allergies:** Allergic reactions can lead to eye inflammation and irritation, which may trigger twitching.

In addition to these common causes, several medical conditions could also lead to eye twitching, including:

- **Blepharospasm:** This condition may be characterised by the involuntary contraction of the muscles around the eye.
- **Hemifacial spasms:** These can occur when one side of your face twitches or spasms involuntarily; hemifacial spasms are normally caused by a nervous system disorder.
- **Thyroid dysfunction:** An overactive or underactive thyroid gland may cause muscle twitching.

Reducing stress to relieve eye twitching

If you suspect that stress is contributing to your eye twitching, consider the following tips to help you lower your stress levels:

- **Exercise (if possible):** Regular physical activity can reduce muscle stress and tension and release endorphins, which naturally improve mood.
- **Yoga:** A form of exercise that combines movement, deep breathing and meditation. It is especially effective at relieving stress.
- **Meditation:** Meditation can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and tension in the mind and body. It normally involves focusing on the present moment and letting go of thoughts about the past and future.
- **Time management:** Setting realistic goals and prioritising tasks for yourself may help reduce stress.

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Lifestyle changes to relieve eye twitch

In addition to reducing stress, the following lifestyle changes may help relieve eye twitching.

- **Get enough sleep:** Adequate rest is essential for the proper functioning of the body and mind. A lack of sleep can lead to fatigue, which might cause eye twitching.
- **Stay hydrated:** Dehydration can lead to dry eyes, which may trigger twitches. Avoid triggers. Limiting caffeine and alcohol can help prevent twitching.
- **Eat a balanced diet:** A diet rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants can nourish the body and eyes.

- **Eye care:** Practising good eye care, such as using computer glasses, taking regular breaks when using digital devices and using artificial tears, may prevent dry eyes.
- **Quit smoking:** Smoking can worsen dry eyes, leading to twitching. Quitting smoking may improve your overall health.

These lifestyle changes may not eliminate eye twitching, but they can reduce its frequency and severity. Self-care and overall well-being can empower you to better manage the condition.

Source:

<https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/stress/how-eye-twitching-and-stress-are-related/>

Did you know? Interesting eye facts

- The world's most common eye colour is brown.
- The most active muscles in your body are in your eyes.
- You blink about 15 to 20 times per minute.
- The average blink lasts about a third of a second.
- Eyes heal very quickly.
- The human eye can distinguish more than 10 million unique colours.
- You blink considerably less when using a computer, reading a cell phone or viewing other digital devices.
- Eye muscles are the fastest contracting muscles in the human body.

Healthy mouth, healthy you: Oral health tips for diabetics

If you or one of your family members are living with diabetes, this article will offer helpful insights, practical tips and easy-to-follow guidelines to help maintain optimal oral health.

Why is oral health important for a diabetic patient?

Research has shown that diabetes affects many parts of the body, including the mouth. Diabetes increases the number of harmful bacteria that cause tooth decay and oral health complications. In some cases, these harmful bacteria make it difficult to keep sugar levels under control, thereby worsening your condition.

Diabetes can also increase the amount of glucose in your saliva. Bacteria in your mouth

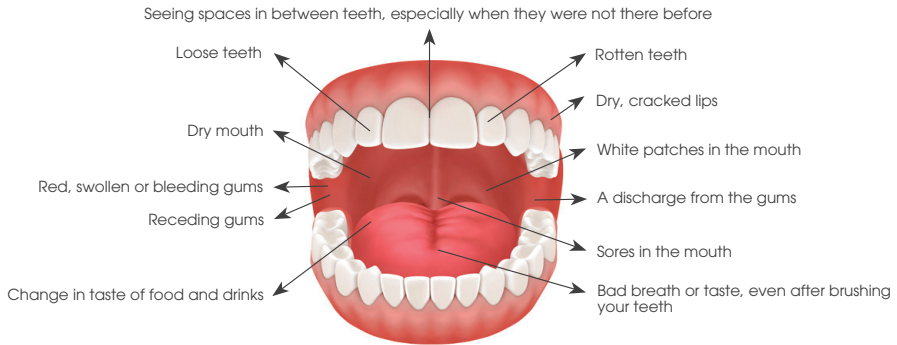
feed on the glucose, leading to more bacterial growth and the forming of a soft, sticky film called plaque. This in turn builds up on your teeth near your gum line and hardens into a deposit called tartar, which can cause gum disease.

If your diabetes is not well-controlled, you have a higher chance of mouth infections, particularly periodontal (gum) disease. This disease can damage your gums and the bones that hold your teeth in place and it might make it painful to chew. Sometimes, people with serious gum disease even lose their teeth. Diabetes and some medication used to treat diabetes can cause a dry mouth. Saliva protects the tissues in your mouth, as it washes away food particles, prevents bacteria from growing and fights acid formed by the bacteria in your mouth. When your mouth is dry, you have a higher risk of dental cavities and gum disease.

How do I know if my oral health is affected by diabetes?

Take time to check your mouth regularly. If you notice any of the following signs of oral health problems, please make an appointment to visit your dentist. They will create a treatment plan to suit your specific oral health needs.

- Dry, cracked lips
- Dry mouth
- Bad breath or taste in your mouth that does not go away when you brush your teeth
- Change in taste of food and drinks
- Loose teeth or gums pulling away from your teeth (receding gums)
- Seeing spaces in between teeth, especially when they were not there before
- If you wear dentures, a change in the fit of the dentures
- Rotten teeth
- Sores in the mouth
- Sore gums or painful white patches
- A discharge from the gums
- Gums bleed when you brush and floss



Can I do anything to improve my oral health?

Yes, you can keep your teeth and gums healthy even if you have diabetes. Here are some important things to do:

- Keep your blood glucose levels under control.
- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes every morning and night. Use a small- to medium-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush.
- After brushing your teeth at night, do not eat or drink anything other than water before you go to bed.
- Floss to clean between your teeth. Do this once daily or a minimum of three times a week.
- Avoid sweets, sugary food and sugar-filled drinks – make water your main drink.
- Make it a habit to rinse your mouth with water after every meal or snack.
- If you smoke, try to quit. If you are finding it difficult to quit smoking, reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke to start off with. Smoking makes gum disease worse and it makes it more difficult to manage blood sugar levels.
- Visit a dental healthcare professional at least once a year for routine checkups or more often if your dentist says you need it. Be sure to tell the dentist that you have diabetes and give the dentist a list of any medication you take.



Refer to the Transmed Dental Benefit Tables at www.denis.co.za for more information on your oral health benefits and how you are covered on your chosen option.

Source:
DENIS

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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