



transmed
MEDICAL FUND

TransHealth

SECOND EDITION OF 2025



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Principal Officer's note



Welcome to the second edition of **TransHealth** for 2025.

We have pleasure in presenting the second edition of TransHealth for 2025 and trust that the information in this issue is both informative and helpful.

As warmer days are changing into colder days and the winter chill starts to bite, flu infections are increasing. We wish to encourage you to have yourself and your family vaccinated against the flu bug.

In this edition we focus on sciatica, which is nerve pain from an injury or irritation. We've also included tips to boost your memory.

Congratulations to the winners of last issue's competition. Once again there are excellent prizes up for grabs. We have included a brainteaser where we ask you to complete a puzzle to find a missing word through a process of elimination. All the answers are in this edition.

I 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.

Happy reading.

Yours in good health

Petrus Wassermann

Principal Officer



Flu: Get vaccinated

As we head towards winter, it is important to be prepared for the influenza (flu) season. The most common symptoms of flu are:

- sudden start of fever
- muscle pains and body aches
- dry cough
- sore throat
- loss of appetite
- runny nose
- headaches
- feeling tired or unwell.

It's easy to catch the flu. When a nearby sick person sneezes or coughs, they send out a spray of virus-laden droplets straight to your open mouth or nose. You can also pick it up from touching surfaces such as tables, counters, desks or doorknobs.

Below are a few useful tips to protect yourself and others:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap every time you shake hands or touch a surface that might be covered with germs.
- Carry an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with you for when you can't get to a basin to wash your hands with soap and water.
- Bring along disinfectant wipes to clean any surfaces you're about to touch.
- Take extra care not to touch your mouth, eyes or nose without washing your hands first.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.

If you want your immune system to be in good enough shape to fight off the flu and other germs, you need to stay healthy:

- Follow a balanced diet.
- If possible, exercise.
- Get at least seven to nine hours of sleep a night.
- Manage your stress levels.
- Stay hydrated.

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Getting the flu vaccine lowers your risk of becoming seriously ill with flu and limits the spread of infection to others.



The Fund covers one flu vaccine per beneficiary per year from insured benefits and will pay for the cost of the vaccine at the Transmed rate, subject to the vaccine formulary (list of approved vaccinations).

Where charged, the consultation fee will be covered from your day-to-day benefits. The Transmed pharmacy network is the designated service provider for flu vaccines. Visit www.transmed.co.za to find a network pharmacy.

Link plan members must please contact Universal on 0861 686 278 for designated service provider information.

Sciatica

Sciatica happens when irritation, inflammation, pinching or compression affect one or more nerves that run down your lower back and into your legs.

What is sciatica?

Sciatica is nerve pain from an injury or irritation to your sciatic nerve. In addition to pain, it can involve tingling or numbness in your back or a buttock that may also radiate down your leg. More severe symptoms are also possible.

Your sciatic nerve is the longest and thickest nerve in your body. It's up to two centimetres wide. Despite its name, it's not just one nerve. It's actually a bundle of nerves that come from five nerve roots branching off from your spinal cord.

You have two sciatic nerves – one on each side of your body. Each sciatic nerve runs through your hip and buttock on one side. They each go down the leg on their side of your body until they reach just below your knee. Once there, they split into other nerves that connect to parts farther down, including your lower leg, foot and toes.

Having sciatica means you can experience mild to severe pain anywhere with nerves that connect to the sciatic nerve. The symptoms can affect your lower back, hips, buttocks or legs. Some symptoms may extend as far down as your feet and toes, depending on the specific nerves affected.

Types of sciatica

There are two types of sciatica. Regardless of what type you have, the effects are the same. The types are:

- **True sciatica.** This is any condition or injury that directly affects your sciatic nerve.
- **Sciatica-like conditions.** These are conditions that feel like sciatica, but happen for other reasons related to the sciatic nerve or the nerves that bundle together to form it.

What are the symptoms of sciatica?

Sciatica symptoms can include:

- **Pain.** Sciatica pain happens because of pressure on the affected nerves. Most people describe sciatica pain as burning or like an electric shock. This pain also often shoots or radiates down the leg on the affected side. Pain commonly happens with coughing, sneezing, bending or lifting your legs upward when lying on your back.
- **Tingling or 'pins and needles' (paraesthesia).** This is similar to the feeling you have when a leg falls asleep because you sit cross-legged.
- **Numbness.** This is when you can't feel sensations on the skin in the affected areas of your back or leg. It happens because signals from your back or leg are having trouble reaching your brain.
- **Muscle weakness.** This is a more severe symptom. It means that muscle command signals are having trouble reaching their destinations in your back or legs.
- **Urinary or faecal incontinence.** This is a very severe symptom. It means signals that control your bladder and bowels aren't reaching their destinations.

What causes sciatica?

Sciatica can happen because of any condition that affects the sciatic nerve. It can also happen because of conditions affecting any of the five spinal nerves that bundle to form the sciatic nerve.

Conditions that can cause sciatica include:

- herniated (slipped) disks
- degenerative disk disease
- spinal stenosis, where the spaces in the spine narrow
- foraminal stenosis, where the openings in the spine through which nerves exit narrow
- spondylolisthesis, where a bone in your spine slips forward
- osteoarthritis, which is a degenerative joint disease
- injuries
- pregnancy
- tumours, cysts or other growths
- conus medullaris syndrome, which is a neurological condition caused by compression or damage to the lower end of the spinal cord
- cauda equina syndrome, which is a medical emergency caused by compression of the nerve roots at the lower end of the spinal cord.

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Prevention

The following can help prevent sciatica or reduce the risk of it happening:

- **Maintain good posture.** Follow good posture techniques while you're sitting, standing, lifting objects and sleeping.
- **Quit (or don't start) using tobacco products.** Nicotine from any source (including vaping) reduces blood supply to your bones, which can weaken your spine and its various components.
- **Reach and maintain a weight that's healthy for you.** Make sure you get enough calcium and vitamin D for bone health.
- **Stay active.** Physical activity can include everything from stretching to strength training. Increasing core strength and flexibility can reduce back pain. Other forms of activity, such as aerobic exercise, can also help you reach and maintain a weight that's healthy for you.
- **Protect yourself from falls.** Wear shoes that fit and keep stairs and walkways free of clutter to reduce your chance of falling. Make sure rooms are well-lit and there are grab bars in bathrooms and rails on stairways.
- **Take time to recover if needed.** Don't try to work through back pain. That can lead to even worse injuries. Back pain doesn't have to keep you from being active.

Source:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12792-sciatica>





Boost your memory

If you're feeling forgetful, it could be due to a lack of sleep or a number of other reasons, including genetics, level of physical activity and lifestyle and environmental factors. However, there's no doubt that diet plays a major role in brain health.

The best menu for boosting memory and brain function encourages good blood flow to the brain, much like what you'd eat to nourish and protect your heart.

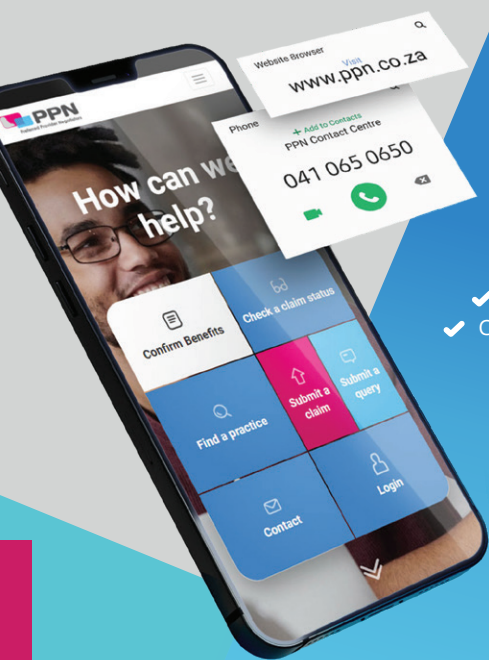
The following food boosts your memory:

- **Eat your veggies.** You're not likely to forget this message. Getting adequate vegetables, especially cruciferous ones (i.e. from the cabbage family), including broccoli and dark leafy greens, may help improve memory.
- **Be sweet on berries and cherries.** Berries – especially dark ones, such as blackberries, blueberries and cherries – are a rich source of anthocyanins and other flavonoids (a natural colouring matter) that may boost memory function. Enjoy a handful of berries for a snack, mixed into cereal or baked into an antioxidant-rich dessert. You can reap these benefits from fresh, frozen or dried berries and cherries.
- **Get adequate omega-3 fatty acids.** Essential for good brain health, omega-3 fatty acids, and docosahexaenoic acid in particular, may help improve memory in healthy young adults.
- **Seafood, algae and fatty fish** – including salmon, bluefin tuna, sardines and herring – are some of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Substitute fish for meat a couple of times each week to get a healthy dose. Grill, bake or broil fish for ultimate flavour and health. If you don't eat fish, discuss other food options and supplementation with your doctor or registered dietician. You can get omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil, seaweed or microalgae supplements.
- **Work in walnuts.** Well known for a positive impact on heart health, walnuts may also improve working memory. Snack on a handful of walnuts to satisfy midday hunger, add them to oatmeal or salad for crunch or mix them into a vegetable stir-fry for extra protein.

These foods are not just good for the brain, they sustain a healthy heart and all parts of the body. While there's no guarantee that these foods will help you remember where you put your keys tomorrow, over time they can support lifelong good health.

Source:

<http://www.eatright.org>



Introducing the PPN Self-help Solution

- ✓ Available 24/7
- ✓ Automated Call Centre
- ✓ Accessible Online
- ✓ Confirm your Optical Benefit
- ✓ Check your Claim Status
- ✓ Find the Nearest Practice

What you will need

- Main Member ID Number
- Membership Number
- Email Address
- Cell Phone Number
- Dependant Date of Birth
- Date of Claim/Service

To speak to an agent when phoning in,
select "Member" and then Option 3.

Know your Optical Benefit

Our optical benefits are designed to offer our members cost-effective, quality eye care.

- Confirm with your optometrist if you want to remain within your optical benefits. Your benefit allows you to obtain spectacles within your optical benefit sub-limits without having to make a co-payment at a network provider.
- Your optical benefits are published in your benefits guide as registered with the Council for Medical Schemes.
- The frequency of claiming is defined as the benefit cycle per beneficiary in your benefits guide.
- Each beneficiary can either have spectacles or contact lenses, not both.
- Services not covered by the matrix should be paid directly to the practice.
- Understanding your benefit will help you to ask informative questions during dispensing of your materials.
- You can determine whether any co-payments may be payable using the Spectacle Cost Calculator. This tool calculates the benefits that will be covered by the Fund. You are able to access the Spectacle Cost Calculator by visiting https://ppn.co.za/self_service/#/pages/opticalbenefits/13 and selecting the applicable bookmark.

To find a PPN provider call **041 065 0650**,
visit www.ppn.co.za or
email info@ppn.co.za.



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Closure of Transmed Customer Services Walk-in Centre in Braamfontein

The Transmed Customer Services Walk-in Centre in Braamfontein closed permanently on 15 May 2025.

While Transmed strives to provide its members with the best service, the low utilisation of the walk-in service in recent years has necessitated a review of the service, which led to a decision to close it permanently.

Members can be assured that they still have access to Transmed's Customer Service Department at any of the contact points below:

- Call us toll free: **0800 450 010**
- Send an email: **enquiries@transmed.co.za**
- Chat with an agent on WhatsApp: **0860 005 037**
- Chat to an agent on Webchat: Log in to your web profile at **www.transmed.co.za**
- Log in to the Transmed **mobile app**.



Transmed mobile app

This app provides you with access to your latest medical aid information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. **If you have not yet downloaded the app, you can find it in the Apple App Store and at Google Play.**



Below are just a few app features:

- Access your electronic membership card. The electronic card on your phone will ensure that, as a Transmed member, you can gain access to your medical fund benefits at all times by sending the card to service providers or showing it to them on your phone.
- Access your membership transaction history, including contributions payment status, personal profile view, benefits and claims processed.
- Request important documentation, such as tax certificates, membership certificates and claims statements.

Update your contact information

If any of your contact information has changed, please remember to let the Fund know. This will allow us to continue to communicate important information to you.

As all communication from the Fund is sent for the most part either by email or SMS, it is especially important to let us know what your cell phone number and email address are or if these details have changed.

You can email these details, including your postal address and additional contact numbers, to **membership@transmed.co.za**.

Please remember to include your membership number on all correspondence to the Fund.



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 **first edition** of TransHealth for 2025.

First prize: Ms L Ferreira
Second prize: Mr DA Minne
Third prize: Ms SJ Roestorff

SOLUTION FROM THE PREVIOUS COMPETITION

Missing word: **CONCENTRATION**

Win with Transmed

Brainteaser competition

We are giving away prizes to the winners of our latest brainteaser competition. All you need to do is to complete the puzzle by circling the relevant words and finding the one that does not appear. The words may appear diagonally, vertically or horizontally. 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:** Brainteaser 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 July 2025**.

Find the following words in the puzzle:

TOUCHING	TRANSACTION
BLACKBERRIES	IMMUNE
BLUEFIN	SEAFOOD
POSTURE	PHARMACY
CUSTOMER	SPINAL
WALNUTS	

Missing word: _____

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