

Update your contact details [here](#) to ensure you don't miss out on important information from the Scheme. In addition, we've also included a Netcare 911 holiday safety guide which you can access [here](#).

Stand together to manage HIV

COVID-19 has been making global headlines all year. While about 770 000 South Africans tested positive for the new disease by end November 2020, an estimated 7.7 million South Africans live with HIV, a virus we've known about for a while.

South Africa is battling two pandemics at the moment: HIV/AIDS and COVID-19. While COVID-19 and the lockdown alert levels are constantly in the news, 1 December is World AIDS Day and a reminder that we all need to stand together and take shared responsibility for stopping viruses from spreading.

As UNAIDS explains: 'COVID-19 has demonstrated that, during a pandemic, no one is safe until everyone is safe. Leaving people behind is not an option if we are to succeed. Eliminating stigma and discrimination, putting people at the centre and grounding our responses in human rights and gender-responsive approaches are key to ending the colliding pandemics of HIV and COVID-19.'

Wear your red ribbon and your mask to show your support.

What can you do?

Everyone can help by knowing their HIV status. Research shows that 90% of people living with HIV know they have the virus. To protect yourself and your family, we recommend all adults get tested for HIV once a year as part of your yearly health check.

If a test confirms that you are HIV positive, you or your Healthcare Provider must register you with the Aid for AIDS programme as soon as possible. Their skilled, professional consultants respect your right to privacy and will help you get access to clinically sound and cost-effective treatment for your individual needs. Please be assured that we treat each case with complete confidentiality.

Although a lot of work has been done to reduce discrimination against people living with HIV, the stigma still continues. It can mean people with the virus are abandoned by their families, excluded from social events, expelled from school and face a lack of care and support. Advances in treatment means people with HIV can live long and healthy lives. There is no reason

to treat someone with HIV differently from other people with long-lasting conditions such as asthma.

What care can you get for HIV?

While your HIV status is nothing to be ashamed of, we and our consultants will never tell anyone your status without your permission. Getting cover and support for managing HIV doesn't mean giving up your privacy.

Benefits of the HIV Programme

Aid for AIDS, our HIV management programme, offers the following benefits:

- Medicine to treat HIV* and vitamins for the immune system
- Regular monitoring of the condition
- Monitoring of the patient's response to therapy and tests to pick up side effects
- Continued patient support through dedicated counsellors
- Assistance in finding a registered counsellor for emotional support.

*This includes medicine to prevent mother-to-child transmission and infection after sexual assault or needle-stick injury.

To register please contact Aid for AIDS:

- Call: 0860 10 06 46
- Fax: 0800 600 773
- Email: info@afadm.co.za.
- Website: www.aidforaids.co.za

While it's useful to know that you have access to tools and benefits, it's difficult to imagine how they can make a difference in your life if you haven't experienced them yet.

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COVID-19: Travelling during the COVID-19 pandemic

Travel is one of the main ways COVID-19 has been making its way around the world. There are restrictions on international travel. Visas are being cancelled and even local travel have been reconsidered and restructured.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is highly transmissible and its swift spread has meant new hotspots presenting almost daily across the world, forcing a rethink of travel plans. Some countries have gone so far as to cancel international travel outright, in the short term.

What precautionary measures must I follow?

1. Avoid contact with sick people.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using an alcohol based hand sanitiser that contains 60% to 95% alcohol. You should use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
4. It is especially important to clean your hands after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
5. Supplies of hand sanitiser, tissues, and other hygiene products may be limited, so consider taking them with you.
6. Pay attention to your health during travel and for 14 days after you return.
7. Make sure that you follow instructions from local authorities on any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings.

For more information:

- See the **National Department of Health's Travel Advice** for South Africans travelling to affected countries
- Visit the CDC's **Travel Health Notices** page and **destination page** for updates regarding these warnings

Visit the NICD website at www.nicd.ac.za for further information. For medical/clinical related queries by health care professionals only, contact the NICD Hotline +27 (0) 82 883 9920 (for use by healthcare professionals only). For laboratory related queries call the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis (011 555 0315/7/8 or 011 555 0488).

Guidelines and case definitions are available on the NICD website

Visit the **CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel** for regular updates.

All medical information found on this website including content, graphics and images, is for educational and informational objectives only. SABMAS publishes this content to help to protect and empower all South Africans by promoting a better understanding of COVID-19.



Do you know how to get support to help control your diabetes?

Half of people living with diabetes don't know they have it. We know that more than 4.5 million adult South Africans have diabetes. 14 November is World Diabetes Day, now is the time to know your blood sugar levels. And if you have diabetes, we have the enhanced support and benefits to help you.

Since March, South Africans have been focusing on the signs of infection and protecting themselves from the COVID-19 virus. This is sensible, but so is paying attention to a condition that affects 12.7% of adults in South Africa according to the International Diabetes Federation's (IDF's) 2019 Diabetes Atlas. By now, even more adults could have diabetes, especially considering the jump in numbers from just three years ago.

Have your blood sugar tested. Early detection and treatment can help prevent complications. If your diabetes is under control, you can lead a full, healthy life.

Getting the best health outcomes

Teamwork is the best way to manage chronic conditions like diabetes. You have to do your part by knowing your blood sugar, educating yourself, making healthy food choices, exercising, and taking your prescribed medicine. But while you have to put in the time and dedication to manage your condition, you have a team of healthcare professionals to guide and support you.

People with diabetes have the best health outcomes when one doctor helps you manage your diabetes with the support of a healthcare team. This makes sure that everyone involved in your treatment is following the same strategy and that they share important information with each other.

Research shows that modifying health care delivery to include team-based care combined with patient-centred technologies offers great promise to better treat chronic conditions, so you get the best health outcomes.

The Diabetes Care Programme

Once you register for diabetes on the Chronic Illness Benefit, you have cover for the care, treatment and ongoing management of your diabetes through the Diabetes Care Programme. This does not use up their day-to-day benefits, where applicable.

The Diabetes Care Programme is based on clinical and lifestyle guidelines. Through the programme, the member and

enrolling GP can agree on key goals and track the member's progress on a personalised dashboard on HealthID.

In addition to the standard treatment basket of procedures and consultations available to members approved on the Chronic Illness Benefit for the management of diabetes, members who enrol on the Diabetes Care Programme will have access to the following **additional benefits**:

- A biokineticist consultation to ensure that members obtain the best advice about exercise. To ensure that the claims fund from the correct benefit, the biokineticist needs to claim the code DCARE and include the relevant ICD-10 diagnosis code on the claim.
- An additional dietician consultation to ensure that members obtain the best advice about nutrition. To ensure that the claims fund from the correct benefit, the dietician needs to claim the most appropriate code from the table below and include the relevant ICD-10 diagnosis code on the claim.
- Members registered on Diabetes Care will have access to an extra 100 blood glucose strips a year; claimed as a quantity of 50 twice a year.
- Blood glucose test strips on the formulary will be funded in full up to the Scheme rate
- Blood glucose test strips not on formulary will be funded up to the CDA, applicable to plan type.

SABMAS members have access to benefits and technology to help them achieve the best possible health outcomes.



Vaccine hesitancy - how to talk to friends, family and loved ones

There's so much misinformation out there that many people are still not convinced about having their COVID-19 vaccination. Some are filled with fear and doubt; others are sitting on the fence to 'just wait and see'. Here's how to have 'the vaccine talk' with your friends, family and loved ones.

Local and international experts explain that the entire population benefits from a high vaccination rate, especially the most vulnerable and those who are most at risk for severe illness. In fact, the world is a far safer place when many people are vaccinated as this acts as a barrier to slow and prevent the virus from spreading (the so-called population immunity). Nevertheless, vaccine hesitancy is still something we must overcome. So how do you talk to friends, family and loved ones about this highly emotive issue?

How to have that conversation

- Focus on their emotions. Since COVID-19 vaccines are so new, it's normal for people to have doubts, fears and questions about them. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) say that because there is so much information as well as misinformation around, it can be quite overwhelming. So, always start the conversation by acknowledging the person's feelings so they know that you hear them.
 - Don't argue or try to debate. You must create an open, safe space for someone to share their fears, thoughts and feelings. It shouldn't be an argument, and no one needs to win. Be aware of your tone of voice, facial expressions and body language (if you are talking in person).
 - Listen without judgement and try to identify the root of their concerns. You can ask open-ended questions to find out more about these concerns. The CDC explains that you must ask the questions in such a way that you get more than a 'yes' or 'no' response and that can help you to understand what they're worried about. So try saying 'How did watching that news report make you feel?'
 - Ask if you can share information. Never bombard friends, family or loved ones with facts, especially if they did not ask for them. If they agree, they'll be more willing to listen to you instead of feeling overwhelmed by unsolicited facts, explains the CDC. Sharing quick, accurate answers to common concerns can go a long way to help build confidence. But always use reliable sources, and if you don't know the answers to any of their questions, offer to help with research and to admit that even science doesn't have all of the answers.
 - Don't embarrass or shame. If they're not getting vaccinated because of something they read on an un reputable website (a website you cannot trust), don't shout them down. Rather try to demonstrate how it was spun a certain way, or help them to see why it's probably not a good source, advises The Henry Ford Health System. Then you can explain why sites like the CDC and the WHO may be better places to access the latest facts.
 - Emphasise the positives to help them find their own reason to get vaccinated, suggests the CDC. Explain the main reason you want them to get vaccinated: That you're worried about their health and want them to be protected. So after addressing their concerns with empathy and facts, share what helped you to make the decision before trying to steer the conversation to what their life could look like after being vaccinated. This could be to protect their family, to visit elderly relatives, to get back to pre-COVID activities or to travel.
- If they're still not convinced at the end of the chat, never show disappointment or anger. Tell them you respect their decision and give them space to process what was discussed. It may take time but show support that if they ever want to talk or discuss anything else about the COVID-19 vaccines, you are available.