



Prevention is better than treatment

According to UNAIDS, South Africa has the largest HIV epidemic in the world. Our country's population accounts for 19% of people living with HIV globally, 15% of new infections and 11% of AIDS-related deaths globally.

Having HIV changes your life. Without treatment, the virus can be deadly and spreads easily. With treatment though, you can live a long, healthy life. You do need to take your antiretroviral (ARV) medication each day and visit your doctor for blood tests to see how well the medication works. The goal is for your viral load (the amount of the virus found in your blood) to be undetectable. You may have seen some Twitter peeps with statuses that read U=U. That means that although they are HIV positive, their viral load is so low that it is undetectable, which means that it is now considered untransmittable.

Remember that just like other chronic conditions such as diabetes or asthma, you have to keep putting in extra effort to be as healthy as possible.

SABMAS provides care and access to HIV treatment

When you register for our Aid for AIDS Programme you are covered for the all-inclusive care that you need. You get access to clinically sound and cost-effective treatment and you can be assured of confidentiality at all times. Approved medicines on our medicine list are covered in full. To register for Aid for Aids Programme, please visit www.aidforaids.co.za or send a confidential text message to 083 410 9078. You can also fax your membership number to 0800 600 773.

For members living with HIV and AIDS, SABMAS offers members and dependants:

- Medicine to treat HIV and vitamins to boost the immune system
- Regular monitoring of the condition
- Monitoring of the patient's response to therapy
- Monitoring tests to detect side effects

- Ongoing patient support via 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)

If a test confirms that you are HIV positive, you must register with Aid for AIDS as soon as possible. If you are exposed to HIV through sexual assault or from a needle or injection, please ask your doctor to call Aid for AIDS urgently. We can authorise special antiretroviral medicine and help you to prevent possible HIV infection.

No matter your status, we can all work together to be as healthy as possible and reach our future goals. Practice safe sex by using a condom and if you don't know your status and / or aren't on ARV treatment yet, make sure you fix that without delay.



Men's Health: Let's talk man to man

Prevention is best

Giving your family the best of you starts with a healthy lifestyle. That means exercising regularly and following a balanced diet. But other factors, like genetics and stress, can also have a huge impact on your overall health.

That's why it's vital that you go for regular screening tests. They will allow your doctor to pick up any issues early on, so they can be treated immediately.

It's not always our idea of fun to hang out with the GP, but if you stick to a few easy tests every year, you can prevent problems down the road.

Which tests are best?

Begin with the basics like your Body Mass Index (BMI), blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol tests. You can visit your doctor or clinic for these to get the all clear. High blood pressure and high cholesterol can be very dangerous, so be sure to get checked every year.

The following screening tests are also very important:



Prostate cancer: Did you know that SABMAS offers one prostate-specific antigen test per male beneficiary every 3 years? This check is important after you turn 50, or after 40 if you have a family history of prostate cancer. It may include a digital rectal exam and a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test.



Testicular cancer: All men should have a testicular exam when seeing the doctor for a routine checkup. You can also do regular self-exams, checking for hard lumps, bumps or any changes in size and shape.



Colon cancer: This is a check also recommended from the age of fifty, although as the recent death of actor Chadwick Boseman shows, more and more younger men are diagnosed annually. If you have a family history of colon cancer or have any concerns about your bowel health, see your doctor, who may recommend a colonoscopy. It is a painless procedure and takes only about 15 minutes.



HIV test: Take one every year and be sure of your status.



Eye test: An annual test is recommended, and make sure you are checked for glaucoma as well, especially after you turn 40.

The SABMAS Benefit guide has more information on how screening tests are paid by the Scheme.

Men behaving badly?

It's okay to indulge now and again and enjoy life. Just make sure to keep a healthy balance between indulgence and taking care of yourself. Stick to a healthy diet, exercise and do your screening tests regularly, and you will be at your best for a long time to come. For you, and those around you.



Is your car holiday ready?

With the year-end holidays approaching, it's time to make sure that your car is in top-notch condition and ready for the road.

If you're planning to hit the road with family or friends this holiday season, ensuring that your vehicle is safe to drive, no matter the distance, is of utmost importance. Here's what you need to consider before starting your journey.

There's nothing great about smooth tyres

Driving with worn or damaged tyres can significantly increase your odds of having an accident. Of all the different parts of your vehicle, tyres have direct contact with the road you're travelling on. The quality of your car's tyres and the grip that they provide makes all the difference when it comes to making sure that your journey is as safe as possible.

Your car's tyres need to:

- Provide adequate traction and braking force
- Support the weight of your car
- Absorb road shocks
- Support directional steering.

Common problems to look out for when assessing your car's tyres:

- Worn tyres
 - Check the edges of your tyres and look out for worn out areas and insufficient tread. Tyres typically wear thin at the edges when they are too soft or have been under-inflated.
 - If your tyres are worn on one side, this could mean that your car's wheels may need to be realigned.
 - If your tyres have worn near the centre, this could indicate that they have perhaps been over-inflated.
- Tyre pressure
 - When the pressure in tyres is not optimal, there could be an air leak or puncture. These need to be attended to by vehicle garage professionals to assess whether a sufficient repair can be made.
 - Irregularities: If you notice any patches of unevenness or bald spots on your tyres, it is likely that your shock absorbers or wheel balance needs to be assessed. Bulging tyres must be replaced for optimum driving safety.



Are you feeling corona fatigue?

Our lives have changed so dramatically since the end of March, that it's hard to remember a time when hand washing, mask wearing and social distancing weren't top of mind. These important science-proven behaviours will help keep you and your loved ones safe so we need to keep doing them. Even if we're feeling corona fatigue. Here's how we can fight the spread of COVID-19 together.

By now we all know how COVID-19 is spread – through droplets in the air from infected people (whether they show symptoms or not) or from touching your face, eyes or mouth after coming into contact with a contaminated surface. With the COVID-19 infection rate on the rise and South Africa ranking high on the list of most confirmed cases globally, the need to prioritise non-pharmaceutical interventions to fight the pandemic is becoming more and more important – every day.

DID YOU KNOW that by simply talking out loud for 1 minute, you create over 1 000 droplets that stay airborne for up to 14 minutes?

While we wait for a vaccine for this virus, the World Health Organization recommends avoiding the '3 Cs' and continuing to practice healthy habits:

'The 3C's'

1. **Crowded places:** Spaces with a large number of people where social distancing is not possible. Example: At a funeral
2. **Close-contact settings:** Places or situations where people have close-range conversations. Example: Inside a restaurant
3. **Confined spaces:** Spaces with poor ventilation, regardless of the size of the area. Example: In an elevator

Building these simple, yet powerful healthy habits is key to protecting yourself, your loved ones and even your fellow South Africans:



Keep washing your hands

Wash your hands throughout the day for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. This helps reduce the chance of the virus being transmitted.



Practice social distancing

Deliberately maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres away from others to protect against liquid droplets that may contain the virus if someone coughs, sneezes or speaks near you. Teach your children about social distancing.



Never leave home without your face mask

Treat your face mask as you do your favourite underwear. You want them clean, without holes and fitting you snugly without the need to constantly readjust them.

Keep reminding yourself that we have the power to prevent COVID-19 through healthy and responsible behaviours. Your family, friends, community, colleagues, and country is counting on you. Stay home, stay healthy and help save lives.

For more information, visit the [SABMAS website](#).