

AUGUST MEDIFLASH

SCREENING TESTS EVERY WOMAN NEEDS

When it comes to common conditions that affect women, prevention (where possible) is better than cure, and early diagnosis ensures the best possible health outcomes. Here's a summary of the most important routine screening checks that all women should keep up with to ensure their best health.

For you to be healthy, various systems in your body need to work together and work well. The problem is that you can't always judge how healthy you are by how well you feel. Take control of your health with routine screening tests like your yearly Vitality Health Check, a Pap smear every three years and, after 40, a mammogram every two years.

When you go for routine screening tests, you're rewarded with better knowledge about your health and the chance to improve it.

Screening tests for cancer

Breast cancer and cervical cancer are two of the most common cancers among women in South Africa. Luckily, there's a good chance of recovery if you catch them early. By knowing your body, what's normal for you and going for regular screenings, you can prevent cancer from sneaking up on you.

Pap smears and HPV tests can detect cervical cancer early

Early-stage cervical cancer often has no symptoms. That's why regular screening is so important. It helps to detect early changes in the cervix before they develop into more serious conditions or cancer. Cervical cancer screening is done through a Pap smear or a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test.

- A Pap smear looks for abnormal cells in the cervix that may lead to cancer. If your screening test is abnormal, it doesn't mean that you definitely have cancer. Most abnormal results are caused by an infection or the presence of treatable precancerous cells, rather than cancer itself.
- Female members of MEDiPOS Medical Scheme have cover for a Pap smear every three years from our [Preventative Care Benefit](#). Members who are at high risk, such as those living with HIV or those who have had abnormal Pap smear results, have access to yearly screenings.
- An HPV test checks for the presence of the HPV virus, which may lead to cervical cancer over time. The Scheme recommends an HPV test for female members every five years, or every three years for those at high risk.



Mammograms reveal breast lumps that could be breast cancer

Women often detect breast lumps themselves before a healthcare provider does. That's why it's so important to [examine your breasts each month for abnormalities](#). From the age of 40, women are encouraged to go for breast cancer screenings, in the form of mammograms. A mammogram can detect breast lumps before you feel them.

Female members of MEDiPOS have cover for a mammogram every two years from the Preventative Care Benefit. Those who are at high risk of developing breast cancer can have their mammograms annually, as well as extra screening tests like a breast MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or a genetic test, where applicable.

Catch other conditions before they start with the Vitality Health Check

You can ward off certain conditions before they take hold. The health check measures your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol and calculates your body mass index (BMI). These screening tests work out your risk for chronic conditions like high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity.

Your health is unique to you, so we use the results of your individual health check results to refer you to personalised condition-specific healthcare programmes if you need them. Our programmes give members and their Premier Plus GPs the tools they need to monitor and manage health conditions.

If you have a health check done and it shows you are at risk for developing certain conditions, and you're a member of MEDiPOS, you have cover for general screening tests and extra tests based on your age, sex and health profile. You'll then get tailored health goals to guide you on how to manage your health conditions.

Don't forget these other important screening tests

Along with the screenings already mentioned, there are other important checks that can help you stay on top of your overall health.

- **Check your skin regularly** for moles that change in size, shape or colour, or that start to itch or bleed. These could be signs of skin cancer and should be looked at by a healthcare provider
- **Screen for colorectal cancer** every two years if you're between 45 and 75 years of age. This involves a simple test to check for blood in your stool. High-risk members have access to more regular colonoscopy screening

Don't delay. Have your screening tests to catch conditions early before they have the chance to catch you!

Source

Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA). [Women & cancer](#)





FIGHT OBESITY IN SOUTH AFRICA, ONE STEP AT A TIME

The impact of obesity on individual health globally is significant. Good nutrition and regular physical activity are simple but immensely effective lifestyle changes that will set you on the road towards better health.

About 5 million people die prematurely each year worldwide due to health conditions linked to being overweight and obesity. There are a number of health concerns linked to obesity, including:

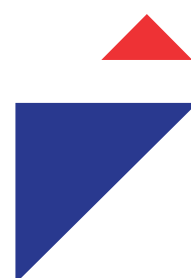
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke)
- Certain cancers (breast and colon)
- Reproductive health issues (infertility and higher risk of miscarriage)
- Increased strain on bones, muscles and joints
- Emotional distress and depression
- Low quality of life
- Respiratory problems (sleep apnoea and asthma)

Walk your way to better health

If you'd like to become fitter and active, but don't know where to start – a walk is a great first step. Here are some ways you can ease your way into a habit of regular physical activity.

Take advantage of everyday opportunities to move more

There are many simple ways to move more each day. Park further away from the entrance so you walk a bit further to the shop, take the stairs instead of the lift or escalator, or use a bathroom at work on another floor. You can also add more movement through everyday household chores, such as sweeping or mowing the lawn.



Walk or jog with a group

Joining (or starting) a walking group can be really fun and help keep you accountable. Training together taps into both our human desire for approval, and our capacity to influence others. A group can help to take your mind off the pace, the inclines, and the distance – and by doing so challenge you to walk or jog better, faster, and stronger.

Sign up for an event

Having an achievable (but still challenging) goal can give you the drive and focus you need to stick to a habit. Enter a race or event that will happen in the middle or end of spring to motivate you to keep up your physical activity.

Source

[Obesity | Our World in Data](#)



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Claims

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Fraud Hotline

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Hospital Preauthorisation

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Internet Queries

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Chronic Medicine Benefit

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