

Spinal Conservative Care Programme

Introducing the Spinal Conservative Care Programme

Back pain is one of the most common medical conditions experienced by members. Appropriate out-of-hospital conservative management of back pain has proven to deliver good outcomes and could prevent the need for surgery.

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme will help you manage your condition with the support of a network of healthcare providers that specialise in the treatment and rehabilitation of back and neck pain.

About some of the terms we use in this document

There may be some terms we refer to in the document that you may not be familiar with. Here are some of the terms explained.

Terminology	Description
Cover	Cover refers to the benefits you have access to and how we pay for these healthcare services such as consultations, medicine and hospitals
Medical Scheme Rate	This is the rate we pay for healthcare services from hospitals, pharmacies, healthcare providers and other providers of relevant health services. Where we have specific agreements with healthcare providers, the agreed rate is the Medical Scheme Rate for that provider type, for instance hospitals, specialists or GPs.
Find a healthcare provider	Find a healthcare provider is a medical and provider search tool which is available on the website www.medipos.co.za
HealthID	HealthID is an online digital platform that gives your doctor fast, up-to-date access to your personal health information. Once you have given consent, your healthcare provider can use HealthID to access your medical history, make referrals to other healthcare providers and check your relevant test results.

Access to the programme subject to clinical entry criteria

You may qualify as a possible candidate for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme for conservative back or neck pain management, subject to clinical entry criteria and after a recent hospital stay or request for a spinal-related hospital admission.

You also have the option of being referred to the Spinal Conservative Care Programme by a network spinal surgeon, who will assess your suitability for the programme.



Where the clinical entry criteria are met, you will have the option of visiting a healthcare provider in the conservative care network for a full assessment for enrolment on the programme. Please note that enrolment is subject to the assessment and is not guaranteed.

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme is a coordinated out-of-hospital programme for the conservative treatment of spinal pain. The Programme offers you cover for and access to:

- A Network of physiotherapists and chiropractors who are trained in the management of spinal pain, supported by a network of spinal surgeons and network general practitioners, where applicable.
- A focused programme developed by experts in the conservative (non-surgical) management of back pain. The programme is flexible, providing a combination of in-person and virtual care, as deemed necessary by the therapists, and may be overseen by a spinal surgeon or general practitioner in the network.

You will need to consult a chiropractor or physiotherapist in the conservative care network to be assessed for enrolment onto the programme. For your chosen healthcare provider to view your medical records on HealthID, you must grant them consent to access your Electronic Health Record. Through the programme, you and your treating healthcare provider can agree on key goals and track your progress.

Your chiropractor or physiotherapist will work with you to manage your condition

Once enrolled, the Spinal Conservative Care Programme gives you access to a defined basket of care for consultations with a network conservative care healthcare provider over a period of 24 weeks. These sessions can be conducted face-to-face or through the Discovery Connected Care online platform. You can choose to consult either a network physiotherapist or a network chiropractor for your treatment.

Your treating healthcare provider will decide what is best for you and your condition. Once enrolled, we cover the consultation fee with your healthcare provider in full and cover will not affect your day-to-day benefits, where applicable. Any additional conservative healthcare services outside of those approved as part of the defined basket of care, will be covered in accordance with your day-to-day benefits.

To find a physiotherapist or chiropractor in the network:

Log on to the website

1. Log in to the MEDIPOS website at www.medipos.co.za and navigate to **Going to see a healthcare provider > Medical and provider search tool**.

2. Type the description of the healthcare provider you would like to find closest to you (for example 'physiotherapist') and enter your address, then click the search icon.
3. To filter your results for physiotherapists or chiropractors in the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, select **Care Programmes** under the search filters, and tick the box for **Spinal Conservative Care**.

Your chosen healthcare provider will assess you for possible enrolment onto the programme

Your healthcare provider will assess you to see whether you qualify for enrolment onto the programme through HealthID with your consent. They also have to capture specific clinical information related to your condition during the course of the programme.

Your cover on the programme

If you are enrolled on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme:

- Any additional conservative healthcare services, outside of the sessions approved as part of the defined basket of care, will be covered in accordance with your day-to-day benefits.
- You may not change conservative care network providers once enrolled on the programme.
- If you stop the programme, we do not provide any further benefits you may have qualified for when you were enrolled on the programme.
- Where clinically appropriate, your conservative care network provider can refer you for further assessment with a Network spinal surgeon. If you need to have surgery, your enrollment on the programme will end.
- You are eligible for enrollment on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme only once per year, even if your condition recurs or a new area of concern arises.
- If you have had spinal surgery in the past 12 months, you do not qualify for enrolment on the programme.

SPINAL CONSERVATIVE CARE PROGRAMME 2026

This programme excludes cover in the case of emergencies, oncology, congenital and moderate to severe trauma-related injuries. These are covered according to the benefits offered by the Scheme.

Important information about the programme

If you are enrolled on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme:

1. We do not pay for extra out-of-hospital claims or services for your back or neck condition over and above the consultations included as part of the programme. If you see your conservative care network provider for the programme today, and you see them again two days later for the same spinal condition, this consultation will be included as part of the programme and will be covered from the basket of care you get as part of the programme.



2. The programme is designed to offer you up to 8 sessions of care with a Conservative Care Network provider over a period of 24 weeks or you may choose a 10-week fully funded virtual care option.
3. Once your Conservative Care Network provider assessed you and successfully enrolled you on the programme, you may not change providers.
4. If you choose to stop participating in the programme, you must cover the costs of any extraspinal care from your own pocket.
5. If the status of your condition changes, your Conservative Care Network provider can refer you for further assessment and care with a network spinal surgeon. If you need to have surgery, your enrolment on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme will end.
6. You can qualify to take part in the Spinal Conservative Care Programme once every calendar year, depending on whether you meet the clinical entry criteria.

If you have had spinal surgery in the past 12 months, you do not qualify for the programme. Please note that if you are flagged as a possible candidate for the programme and you proceed with spinal surgery, you will no longer be eligible for the programme.

This programme excludes emergencies, oncology, congenital conditions and trauma-related injuries. You are covered for these conditions according to your available health benefits on your chosen benefit option.

If you do not meet our clinical entry criteria and your enrolment on the programme is unsuccessful, the programme will not be activated. We will cover any treatment your healthcare provider administers according to your available health benefits on your chosen benefit option.

If you have any questions about the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, you can call us on **0860 100 078** or visit www.medipos.co.za for more information.

Complaints process

You may lodge a complaint or query with MEDIPOS directly on 0860 100 078 or address a complaint in writing directly to the Principal Officer. Should your complaint remain unresolved, you may lodge a formal dispute by following the Scheme's internal disputes process.

Members, who wish to approach the Council for Medical Schemes for assistance, may do so in writing to:

Council for Medical Schemes Complaints Unit, Block A, Eco Glades 2 Office Park, 420 Witch-Hazel Avenue, Eco Park, Centurion, 0157 or email complaints@medicalschemes.co.za.

Customer Care Centre: 0861 123 267 / website www.medicalschemes.co.za