

AT SIZWE HOSMED, WE FOCUS ON WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE ALL YEAR-ROUND

Women's Health Awareness



As we commemorate Women's Month in August, we, at Sizwe Hosmed Medical Aid Scheme would like to honour the role that women play in our lives - in our homes, communities and our places of work; but primarily because we are all born of women, and this life-giving power deserves to be recognised. We would like to take a bow and honour the women who continue to be the glue that holds their families together and who strengthen their communities with their service - to you all, we say happy Women's Month!

Women make up the bulk of our member base at Sizwe Hosmed, and we have made it our priority to understand and cater for women's healthcare needs. Our plans and benefits demonstrate that we truly care about women - all year round, not just during Women's Month.

Women and men share many similar health problems, however, women have a unique set of health needs, which deserve special consideration. At Sizwe Hosmed, we have designed our plans and benefits to accommodate these needs and our members can be assured of quality care at all times. The plans cater to women's mental health, maternal health, reproductive health, HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and patients diagnosed with various types of cancers.

Mental Health: Given the high prevalence of mental health among women, the Scheme offers mental health benefits through its Disease Management Programme. Our members have access to counselling services through a multidisciplinary team of therapists, as well as medical treatment provided by clinicians. We encourage you to seek help from a professional when you can't cope with

stress, can't control your emotions, or experience mood swings to such a degree that it interferes with your ability to function; or any other similar signs.

Maternal Health: The Scheme offers maternity benefits to all the women across all its Plans. Members have access to GP, midwife, and specialist consultations, throughout their pregnancy and post child delivery. Women also have a choice of delivery methods, subject to clinical appropriateness. We encourage pregnant women to enroll into the Sizwe Hosmed Bambino Programme or additional benefits. Women who enrol for this programme at or before 24 weeks also receive a goody-bag loaded with surprises!

Reproductive Health: The female reproductive system is very complex and delicate. Our goal is to improve women's health through our benefit offerings - right from their first menstrual cycle to after menopause. Members have access to doctors visits as well as contraceptives, antidepressants hormone therapy etc., as prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional. Members are encouraged to maintain good hygiene practices and a healthy lifestyle. Regular screening and health checks are important for the prevention and early detection of disease.

HIV: South Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV worldwide. Women are much more vulnerable to HIV infection than men, and we have seen a drastic increase in the rate of infection of young women between the ages of 15 and 24 years old. Consistent and correct use of condoms has been found to reduce the risk of HIV infection significantly. Female condoms are also now available to choose from. Sizwe Hosmed offers Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) to all its members as part

of its preventative benefits. An HIV diagnosis is manageable and infected members are encouraged to enrol on the HIV Programme for additional benefits, including antiretroviral treatment (ART), and regular monitoring through relevant blood tests.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): The scheme offers benefits for the prevention and treatment of STIs such as gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and syphilis. Untreated syphilis is responsible for more than 200 000 stillbirths and early foetal deaths every year, and for the deaths of over 90 000 newborns. The scheme also offers Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccines as per the benefit guide provided.

Cancers: As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), two of the most common cancers affecting women are breast and cervical cancers. Sizwe Hosmed believes in early detection of these cancers to keep women alive and healthy. The latest

global figures show that approximately half a million women die from cervical cancer and half a million from breast cancer each year. To this effect, Sizwe Hosmed member have access to screening, prevention, and treatment of these cancers. Benefits available include Pap smear, HPV screening and vaccination, breast examinations and mammograms. Early detection can be life-saving so we encourage all our female members to conduct regular self-examinations to check their breast for lumps. If diagnosed with cancer, treatment is available through a network of Oncologists contracted to the Scheme. And additional benefits are available upon registration onto the Oncology Disease Management Programme.

As a benefit to our female members/beneficiaries, we have developed a **Cervical Screening Recommended Guidelines Tool, which we have adapted from ASCCP, which we hope you will find helpful:**

Age/Stage	Recommended screening method	Frequency
21- 25 years and 1 year after initial sexual intercourse	Papsmear (Cytology)	every 2-3 years
25 - 29 years	Papsmear and HPV co-testing	every 2-3 years
30 - 65 years	HPV-testing as primary screen Or	every 3-5 years
	Papsmear and HPV co-testing Or	every 3-5 years
	Papsmear if no history of abnormal smears and prior adequate negative screening.	every 2-3 years
> 65 years	No screening after prior adequate negative screening.	Women with a history of CIN II+ should continue routine screening for at least 20 years
Post hysterectomy (after surgical removal of uterus)	No screening	Applies to women without a cervix and without a history of CINII+ diagnosis in the past 20 years, or any history of cervical cancer ever. Evidence of adequate negative prior screening is not required
HPV vaccinated	Screening practices should not change on the basis of HPV vaccination status	
HIV positive women	Initiate cervical screening at the time of diagnosis. Women with HIV should never exit screening.	Every year if cytology and Every 3 years if HPV screening

In general, we encourage all women to take care of their overall health through the adoption of a healthy lifestyle to prevent disease and illness. Smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol are discouraged. Make physical activity an important part of your family life, and maintain a healthy and balanced diet. Most importantly, do not skip your annual wellness checks because early detection can save lives.

Sizwe Hosmed has developed and designed its benefit plans with you in mind. We offer a variety of medical aid plans to suit every stage of your life - whether you need only a hospital plan or if you have a very specific range of healthcare needs that require comprehensive medical aid cover. Our knowledgeable consultants can assist you in making an informed decision in deciding that the plan you sign up for covers you for what you

need and what works for your budget because we understand the importance of affordability and flexibility when it comes to medical aid.

Contact Us today!

At Sizwe Hosmed Medical Scheme, our plans are tailored with your needs in mind.

Visit our website on <https://www.sizwehosmed.co.za> and look for the full breakdown of our plans and benefits to select the plan that would best suit your needs. You can also call us on 0860 100 871 (Toll-free).

Sizwe Hosmed - *Your Choice For Quality Care!*