**Don’t wait – manage your stress and anxiety now!**

**JOHANNESBURG - The week has only begun, and you've just stepped out of a stressful meeting. Your phone buzzes non-stop, and your to-do list is growing faster than you can manage. For many South Africans, ongoing stress quietly elevates blood pressure and heightens the risk of serious health problems.**

South Africans are known for their resilience, but sometimes that can work against us. Powering through stress without addressing it can leave you vulnerable to serious long-term health issues. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation in South Africa, more than [1 in 3 adults](https://heartfoundation.co.za/blood-pressure/#:~:text=High%20blood%20pressure%2C%20or%20hypertension,in%20every%205%20heart%20attacks.) live with high blood pressure, making hypertension a major contributor to a short life expectancy.

High blood pressure often has no noticeable symptoms, making regular check-ups crucial. However, stress-related anxiety conditions tend to present more visibly. If you're feeling constantly overwhelmed, struggling to focus, experiencing chest tightness, or having trouble sleeping, it's cause for concern. These symptoms of anxiety, combined with undetected high blood pressure, can have dangerous consequences.

When you’re stressed, your body releases hormones like adrenaline and cortisol that triggers your body’s natural "fight-or-flight" response. While useful in short bursts, a constant activation of this response has detrimental effects, such as high blood pressure or hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and kidney issues. Stress-related anxiety disorders can result in a vicious cycle of mental and physical health challenges.

Wellness programmes that encourage healthy lifestyles and regular health monitoring can play a crucial role in chronic disease prevention. [Medshield Medical Scheme](https://www.medshield.co.za/?utm_source=businesstech&utm_medium=in_article&utm_campaign=medshield_campaign) provides members with an Annual Health Risk Assessment (HRA) benefit to proactively manage their health and prevent more serious medical issues in the future. HRAs are critical for screening, testing, and assessing members’ cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure, and Body Mass Index (BMI) and is a valuable preventive healthcare tool designed to uncover potential health risks before they escalate. It typically includes:

* A review of your medical history.
* An evaluation of lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, and smoking habits.
* Important measurements, including blood pressure, cholesterol levels, blood sugar, and BMI.
* An assessment of risk factors for chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Many serious health conditions develop without noticeable symptoms during the initial stages. Regular HRAs can identify these risks. There are several key benefits:

1. Early detection of health issues: Discovering potential problems early lead to more effective treatment and improved health outcomes.
2. Preventive care: HRAs help create personalised health plans, reducing the risk of chronic disease onset.
3. Improved quality of life: Managing your health risks proactively allows you to lead a healthier, more active lifestyle.
4. Cost savings: Emphasising preventive healthcare diminishes the need for costly treatments and hospitalisations in the future.

**Besides screenings and tests,** [**Medshield**](https://www.medshield.co.za/?utm_source=businesstech&utm_medium=in_article&utm_campaign=medshield_campaign) **shares these easy steps you can incorporate into your daily routine to manage your stress and anxiety:**

1. Monitor your blood pressure regularly: Aim to check your blood pressure at least once a month or more frequently if you're at risk. Many pharmacies across the country offer free blood pressure checks. Early detection can prevent more severe complications later.
2. Incorporate relaxation techniques: Calming your mind can help lower blood pressure. Meditation, deep breathing exercises, and yoga are excellent tools to manage stress. Studies show that practising mindfulness can reduce systolic blood pressure.
3. Exercise regularly: Physical activity is one of the most effective ways to manage stress and blood pressure. You don't need to join a fancy gym – just a brisk 30-minute walk daily can do wonders.
4. Adopt a heart-healthy diet: The South African diet, heavy in processed foods and unhealthy fats, contributes to rising blood pressure levels. Switching to a heart-healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can make a significant difference. Reduce salt intake and use spices and herbs to add flavour to your food.
5. Limit alcohol and quit smoking: While it's tempting to rely on a drink or cigarette to "unwind" after a long day, the long-term impact on your health is severe. Reducing or eliminating these habits will drastically improve your mental and physical health.
6. Get enough sleep: In a country where people are burning the candle at both ends, sleep is often the first sacrifice. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night and keep a consistent sleep schedule.
7. Seek professional help when necessary: Managing stress-related anxiety may require more than just lifestyle changes. Mental health services in South Africa are becoming more accessible, with various public and private resources available. Don't hesitate to reach out to a healthcare professional if you feel your anxiety or stress levels are becoming unmanageable.

It's time to take control – because managing stress and blood pressure is not just about adding years to your life but quality to those years.

Looking for an affordable medical scheme that provides you with access to robust Wellness benefits? Medshield Medical Scheme is your trusted partner in healthcare for life. Visit [www.medshield.co.za](https://www.medshield.co.za/?utm_source=businesstech&utm_medium=in_article&utm_campaign=medshield_campaign) for more information on our range of benefit plans available.

**FIN**

(828 words)

**EDITORS NOTES**

**FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS**

* Stone issues this release on behalf of the Medshield Medical Scheme.
* For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact Willem Eksteen, CEO of Stone or a media liaison member of the Stone team at media@stone.consulting / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / lilanes@medshield.co.za

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2025 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2025 Product Page on the Medshield website at [https://medshield.co.za](https://medshield.co.za/).

You can review the benefit adjustments, and value adds and download the 2025 benefit guides by visiting <https://medshield.co.za/2025-products/2025-benefit-options/> or by scanning the relevant QR code:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefit package and descriptor** | **QR code to view more detail** |
| **PremiumPlus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a comprehensive Personal Savings Account and extended Above Threshold Cover.  | A qr code with a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediBonus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the independence to manage daily healthcare expenses through a substantial Day-to-Day Limit. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediSaver** is perfect for independent individuals and young professionals thinking about expanding their families. MediSaver offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a generous Personal Savings Account. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediPlus** provides middle to upper-income families with complete healthcare cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a generous Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical in both categories, Prime and Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediPlus Compact.  | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediCore** is ideal for healthy individuals looking for comprehensive hospital cover, with daily healthcare expenses self-managed. This option offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at Medshield Private Tariff 200%. Day-to-day healthcare expenses are self-funded. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediValue** is the ideal option for growing families. It offers affordable cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a sizeable Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical on both options, MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediValue Compact. | A qr code with a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediPhila** is ideal for families seeking first-time access to affordable private medical cover. As a MediPhila member, you have full cover for Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) treatment plus R1 million per family for non-PMB In-Hospital treatment in the MediPhila Hospital Network. Coupled with this is Day-to-Day cover for your essential daily healthcare needs. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediCurve** If you are tech-savvy, young and healthy, then MediCurve is the ideal first-time option for you! MediCurve provides generous hospital cover in the MediCurve Hospital Network combined with unlimited virtual Family Practitioner consultations and essential optical and dental cover through network providers | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |

**MORE ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* You never know when you or your family member/s may require medical care or treatment, and most importantly, whether you will have funds available to cover the costs. Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute to the fund every month to cater for medical coverage should the need arise. Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute towards the fund monthly to cater for medical cover should the need arise.
* Medshield has been in operation since 1968, making us one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and reliable medical schemes in South Africa. Our extensive experience in the healthcare sector guides our understanding of our members' needs. Our excellent cover and benefits and the best quality systems and services have resulted in our exceptional size and strength.
* Each of our options offers affordably priced benefits. We continuously review and improve the range of benefits in each option to bring you what you need.
* We partner with our stakeholders to enable access to sustainable and **affordable quality healthcare** through innovative products and benefits.
* Our impeccable reputation of prompt payments to hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other medical caregivers guarantees approval from service providers when you present your Medshield membership card.
* Our extensive partner networks place us in the perfect position to offer exceptionally competitive rates to our members.
* Medshield is well-represented throughout all nine provinces and provides seamless access to service providers in your area. Our geographical spread provides convenience if it becomes necessary for you to have a personal discussion with one of our experienced consultants. We also have a streamlined online claim submission system and immediate contact centre assistance, making it easier to manage your membership and claims from the convenience of your home or office.
* Another distinguishing factor is our extensive range of additional benefits and services. These benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when needed, for instance, in an emergency or when suffering from a chronic or life-threatening condition.
* Compared with other medical schemes, our trustworthiness, impeccable history, and exceptional service guarantee that we come out tops!
* As the interface between the Scheme and our members, Medshield staff are the backbone of our customer service delivery. The successful delivery of service depends entirely on the calibre of our people.