**Why regular health checkups are essential for long-term well-being**

**JOHANNESBURG - We have all heard the proverb, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." While not a literal truth, the proverb highlights the importance of taking a proactive approach to health management.**

With the demands of modern life, including work, family responsibilities, and social commitments, the focus for most people is now primarily on external factors, often at the cost of their health needs until a serious issue arises. Good health is a wise investment. Investing in regular health checkups allows healthcare professionals to monitor your overall health, assess risk factors for disease, and detect potential problems early on, enabling proactive prevention and treatment.

These checkups help you maintain optimal energy and better focus, contributing to a healthier and more fulfilling life. Here's a look at some benefits of prioritising preventative measures and addressing health concerns early on.

**Early detection, prevention and ongoing support**

Many health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and certain cancers, can develop silently without noticeable symptoms in their initial stages. Regular checkups, including screenings, can identify these issues before progressing to a more severe or complex stage, making them easier to manage or treat.

Beyond detecting existing issues, checkups help prevent future problems by encouraging healthy habits, providing vaccinations, and addressing potential risk factors. By understanding your personal and family medical history, lifestyle choices, and environmental factors, healthcare providers can recommend preventive measures tailored to your specific needs. These measures may include lifestyle modifications, vaccinations, and screening tests to reduce the risk of developing severe health conditions.

Regular checkups offer the opportunity to discuss your health goals and lifestyle with your doctor, enabling them to offer personalised guidance and recommendations to support your well-being. Whether you're working on weight loss or fitness goals, or managing a chronic condition, checkups help you track your progress and adjust your care plan accordingly.

**What does a routine checkup include?**

A routine checkup is a comprehensive health assessment designed to detect and monitor potential health issues. Here is a checklist to guide you in making healthier decisions:

* Annual health checkups include a physical examination, a medical history review, and an opportunity to discuss health concerns. For those over 40, it's essential to schedule an annual checkup to monitor for signs of chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis.
* Preventative screenings and tests depending on your age and family history, regular screenings can help detect treatable conditions early. Common tests include:
* Skin checks to catch early signs of skin cancer.
* Mammograms and cervical screening tests for women.
* Bowel screening tests for all people 45 years and older.
* Blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar tests to monitor your cardiovascular and metabolic health.
* Immunisations and vaccinations play an essential role in preventing illnesses. In addition to childhood vaccinations, there are also necessary immunisations for adults like flu shots.
* Mental health check-ins assist with the stress of daily life, work, and personal challenges which can impact our mental well-being. Mental health check-ins are just as important as physical exams. Whether you’re managing stress, dealing with anxiety or depression, or simply discussing how you're feeling, we encourage you to take the time to address your mental health with your GP.
* Chronic disease management helps individuals who are living with a chronic condition (such as asthma, diabetes, or hypertension). It is essential to have regular appointments to monitor and manage your condition as it not only helps you maintain your quality of life but also prevents complications in the future.

**Building a strong doctor-patient relationship**

A strong doctor-patient relationship is essential for adequate healthcare. Regular health checkups foster a strong and trusting relationship between patients and their healthcare providers. Doctors can provide tailored and comprehensive care when patients feel comfortable discussing their health concerns and lifestyle habits. A strong doctor-patient relationship encourages patients to adhere to medical advice and treatment plans, leading to better health outcomes.

Healthcare providers can offer valuable advice on maintaining a healthy lifestyle during regular checkups. This guidance includes nutritional recommendations, exercise, weight management, and harmful habits to avoid, such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. These small adjustments can improve your overall health and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Routine checkups remind us to prioritise self-care and make positive lifestyle choices, laying the foundation for a longer, more fulfilling life. Regular checkups are also vital for effective management of chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, or asthma. These visits enable healthcare providers to monitor the progression of the disease, adjust treatment plans, and ensure that the condition is under control. Consistent monitoring helps prevent complications and improve the overall quality of life for those living with chronic illnesses.

**Staying on track is cost-effective**

Preventive care and early detection of diseases can significantly reduce healthcare costs by avoiding the need for more extensive and expensive treatments later. For instance, managing high blood pressure through regular checkups and lifestyle changes can prevent costly complications such as heart attacks or strokes.

Investing in regular health checkups is a wise financial decision that pays off by ensuring better health and reducing medical expenses over time.

Given our busy lives, it's extremely easy to forget appointments. Here are some tips to help you stay on top of your healthcare:

* **Set a reminder:** Use your phone or calendar to set reminders for regular checkups or screenings.
* **Book in advance:** Scheduling appointments ensure you won't forget or delay essential health visits.
* **Talk to your doctor:** If you have questions or concerns about your health, your doctor will guide you.

**Why choose Medshield?**

Healthcare needs may evolve as you progress through different stages of life, and understanding these changes is crucial for proactive and effective healthcare.

So, whether you need a routine checkup, a specific screening, or ongoing management of a chronic condition, Medshield, as your trusted *Partner for Life* will support and guide you during every step of your health and wellness journey.

**FIN**

(988 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.