**Why and how do we use medication responsibly?**

**Johannesburg - Medication and the rapidly evolving science of medication development can be very beneficial and significantly aid one's health and quality of life. However, it is crucial to use medication responsibly to ensure its effectiveness and safety. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 50% of all patients take medicines incorrectly. Overuse, underuse and misuse of medication result in the wastage of scarce resources, continued health problems or adverse reactions to drugs.**

There are more opportunities today than ever to learn about the medication you take and the particular drug that it contains. If you take several medicines, consult various doctors, or manage specific health conditions, your doctors must know all the medicines you take. Doing so will help you to avoid potential problems such as medication interactions. Medication interactions may cause your prescription to be less effective, cause unexpected side effects, and even harm you.

**Understanding different categories of medication interactions**

* How medication interacts with other medicines, supplements and drugs: The interaction may lead to unexpected side effects. For example, combining two drugs that do not interact well with each other can slow your reactions, potentially making activities like driving dangerous.
* How medication interacts with food and beverages: For example, mixing alcohol with some medicine can cause drowsiness.
* How medication interacts with certain health conditions: The interaction may occur when an existing medical condition makes certain drugs potentially harmful. For example, if you have high blood pressure and take a nasal decongestant, your blood pressure could rise further, leading to an unwanted reaction.

Taking the time to learn about medication interactions and the responsible use of medication is critical for your health, especially when buying over-the-counter (OTC) medicine. When purchasing OTC medicine, you may not always have a health professional available to explain how to use the medicine responsibly. But do not worry, medication will always come with a label and instructions. It is essential to read and understand the label on your medicine to avoid medication interactions. Here are some critical elements of the label to pay attention to:

* The **active ingredients** section provides information about each active ingredient's name, amount and purpose.
* The **uses** section indicates what the medicine is used for and helps you find the best therapy for your specific symptom.
* The **warnings** section offers important precautionary information, such as when the drug should not be used and when to stop taking it.
* The **directions** section of the label provides instructions on how much and for how long you can safely use the product and any special instructions on how to use the product.
* The **other** **information** section offers additional information, like how to store the medicine.
* The **inactive ingredients** section lists other ingredients in the drug, such as colouring and flavouring.

Medshield believes in providing comprehensive benefits to ensure that you and your healthcare provider can use our services best. Our care coordination approach is designed to help Family Practitioners navigate these benefits effectively to fulfil your healthcare requirements. By empowering your doctor with the ability to coordinate different health services, we ensure that you receive proper treatment at every stage of your care journey. Our care coordination approach also helps improve clinical outcomes, reduces morbidity, and makes healthcare more member-centric. This way, we reduce the burden on you and your family members, making accessing the care you need easier.

When you receive a new prescription, discuss all OTC and prescription drugs, dietary supplements, vitamins, and minerals with your healthcare provider.

Medshield offers nine tailored healthcare options, including two Efficiency Discount Options. These healthcare options are reinforced by comprehensive private hospital cover, and medication benefits. In addition, members can access a network of respected healthcare professionals and resources to support their health journey at all life stages.

**FIN**

(624 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](mailto:media@stone.consulting) / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / [lilanes@medshield.co.za](mailto:lilanes@medshield.co.za)

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2024 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2024 Product Page on the Medshield website at <https://medshield.co.za/>. You can review the benefit adjustments and value adds and download the 2024 benefit guides

* **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.
* **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.
* **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.
* **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.
* **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.
* **MediValue - Prime and Compact** - 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.
* **MediSwift** is the ideal hospital plan for active, healthy individuals. Major medical emergency and In-Hospital treatment are covered up to R1 million per family in the Compact Hospital Network, with the added benefit of day-to-day treatment for non-professional sports injuries. As a hospital plan, MediSwift offers no Day-to-Day benefits, allowing members the freedom to self-manage their daily healthcare expenses.

**Medshield Medical Scheme - Live Assured knowing you have a Partner for Life.**

**ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* 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 combined with 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.
* 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.
* Our extensive range of additional benefits and services is another distinguishing factor. Our benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when they need it most, 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!