**What is hyperthyroidism, how is it treated, and does your medical aid cover the treatment?**

**Johannesburg - The thyroid is a small butterfly-shaped gland in the neck, just before the windpipe. It is crucial in regulating various metabolic processes, heart rate and body temperature. However, when the thyroid gland becomes overactive, it can result in** [**hyperthyroidism.**](https://elsaad.com/library/79/452/En)

It is easy to get confused between **hyper**thyroidism and **hypo**thyroidism. The difference is:

* **Hyperthyroidism** is a condition that occurs when the thyroid gland produces an excessive amount of thyroid hormone. This condition can result in various symptoms such as weight loss, hand tremors, brittle bones, vision problems and rapid or irregular heartbeat.
* **Hypothyroidism** ([underactive thyroid](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hypothyroidism/symptoms-causes/syc-20350284) gland) is when the thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. In the early stages of hypothyroidism, it does not cause noticeable symptoms. However, as time passes, hypothyroidism that is not treated can lead to health problems, including high cholesterol and heart problems.

**Three leading causes of hyperthyroidism**

1. **Graves' disease**: The primary cause of hyperthyroidism is an autoimmune disorder when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the thyroid gland, producing excessive hormones.
2. **Thyroiditis**: When the thyroid gland is inflamed due to viral or bacterial infection, causing a temporary increase in thyroid levels.
3. **Overactive thyroid nodules** are abnormal growths or noncancerous lumps in the thyroid gland that produce excessive thyroid hormone, causing an enlarged thyroid.

**Standard treatment for hyperthyroidism**

High thyroid hormone levels can have harmful effects on your body. Fortunately, thyroid conditions are treatable. The best treatment for hyperthyroidism depends on several factors, including age, overall health and the underlying cause and severity of your condition.

If you have hyperthyroidism, your doctor may prescribe anti-thyroid medication to help alleviate symptoms by preventing your thyroid gland from producing excessive amounts of hormones. Typically, symptoms of hyperthyroidism will start to improve within a couple of months. Beta-blockers are a type of medication that might be recommended to help treat symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, though they do not treat the underlying thyroid condition.

Thyroid conditions can also be treated with surgery, specifically thyroidectomy. Thyroidectomy is the surgical removal of your entire thyroid gland. Although the surgery may sound intimidating and life-threatening, living without a thyroid gland is possible. However, you will have to take hormone replacement medication for the rest of your life to maintain good health and prevent side effects.

Radiation therapy is a treatment option that decreases the size of the gland, resulting in a decrease in thyroid function or hypothyroidism. In such cases, taking medicine to replace thyroid hormones might be necessary.

The mineral iodine plays a crucial role in making thyroid hormones. When treating hyperthyroidism, it is common to follow a low-iodine diet. You should also consume non-iodised salt, egg whites, fresh or canned fruit, unsalted nuts, oats, potatoes and honey.

Hyperthyroidism requires appropriate management to restore hormonal balance and alleviate symptoms effectively. Patients must work closely with healthcare professionals and follow their recommended plan to achieve the best possible outcomes.

**How Medshield Medical Scheme covers treatment for hyperthyroidism**

All Medshield members are entitled to cover for Prescribed Minimum Benefits [(PMBs),](https://medshield.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Medshield-PMB-Guide.pdf) irrespective of their chosen benefit option. Medshield covers the cost of treatment and care for a PMB according to the Scheme Rules, provided that the services are rendered by a provider that is one of Medshield's Designated Service Providers (DSP).

Hyperthyroidism is classified as a Chronic Disease List (CDL) condition and qualifies as a PMB. As a result, medical aid schemes must provide coverage for chronic medication and treatment associated with the condition. It is important, though, that you follow the requirements of your medical scheme in terms of PMBs.

Through medical interventions and lifestyle adjustments, individuals with hyperthyroidism can effectively manage their condition and live a healthy and fulfilling life. If you're experiencing thyroid hormone-related symptoms or want to know if you have any risk factors for developing thyroid disease, don't be afraid to talk to your healthcare provider. They are there to help you.

**FIN**

(648 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 2023 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2023 Product Page on the Medshield website at <https://medshield.co.za/2023-benefit-options/>. You can review the benefit adjustments and value adds and download the 2023 benefit guides.

* **MediSwift** is an unlimited hospital plan that covers 100% of hospital procedures and allows active, healthy individuals the freedom to manage their own daily healthcare, with an added biokinetics and physiotherapy benefit for non-professional sportsmen and women.
* **MediCurve** is an affordable digital plan that enables young, healthy, tech-savvy, first-time medical aid buyers to cover without any financial strain on their day-to-day lives. MediCurve offers a bouquet of In-Hospital and Out-of-Hospital benefits with free, unlimited virtual Family Practitioner consultations through the Medshield SmartCare benefits.
* **Premium Plus** provides the most comprehensive cover with freedom of choice, including no network restrictions, 200% cover for specific in-hospital procedures and a Personal Savings Account to manage daily healthcare.
* **MediCore** is more than just a comprehensive hospital benefit. It accommodates your current and future medical needs by allowing you the flexibility to manage your daily healthcare requirements, with cover for specific in-hospital procedures at 200%.
* **MediSaver** offers unlimited In-Hospital cover through the Medshield Hospital Network whilst members manage their own Out-of-Hospital medical requirements through a Personal Savings Account. As an added benefit, the MediSaver option offers an Out-of-Hospital maternity package. It is perfect for independent individuals who want to manage their healthcare expenses and are considering expanding their families.
* **MediBonus** provides families and professional individuals unlimited In-Hospital cover with selected In-Hospital procedures paid at a Medshield Private Tariff of 200% and the freedom to manage their daily healthcare expenses through a Day-to-Day Limit.
* **MediValue** is ideal for individuals who need complete cover for hospital procedures or emergencies and partial daily healthcare cover. The MediValue option has two categories MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact. The benefits of both types are the same. Still, for a smaller contribution, the MediValue Compact category requires using networks, care coordination, and nominating a Family Practitioner and Family Practitioner-to Specialist referrals.
* **MediPlus** is the answer for middle- to upper-income earners needing out-of-hospital healthcare coverage. Members have unlimited In-Hospital cover through the Medshield Hospital Network, and the daily Out-of-Hospital body includes a range of benefits. The Prime and Compact choices suit families and individuals, allowing you to manage your health proactively.
* **MediPhila** You never know when you, or your loved ones, may require medical care that could result in substantial costs. Fortunately, as a MediPhila member, you have unlimited hospital cover for PMB conditions and generous per-beneficiary limits for non-PMB In-Hospital treatments. Additionally, your basic daily healthcare needs are covered with an Out-of-Hospital benefit limit for specific services.

**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!