**When worry becomes overwhelming for new moms – Understanding postpartum mental health**

**Johannesburg - The weeks and months following childbirth are often filled with joy, love, and new experiences. But for many new moms, the postpartum period can also bring unexpected physical, emotional, and mental health challenges. With a mix of sleepless nights, physical recovery, and fluctuating emotions, the demands can feel overwhelming. Fortunately, with the proper support and resources, mothers can find balance and well-being during this period. Here, we'll explore practical postpartum care tips, signs of maternal mental health issues, and how loved ones can help new moms navigate this transition.**

**Is it "baby blues" or Postpartum Depression (PPD)?**

It's completely normal for new moms to experience a range of emotions after giving birth. Most women experience **"baby blues"** in the days following delivery. These feelings of sadness, irritability, and feeling overwhelmed typically last for about two weeks and are primarily due to hormonal changes and sleep deprivation.However, if these feelings persist beyond two weeks, they may indicate **postpartum depression (PPD)**. Symptoms of PPD can include:

* Prolonged feelings of sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness
* Difficulty bonding with the baby
* Intense irritability or anger
* Withdrawal from loved ones
* Loss of appetite or, conversely, overeating
* Insomnia or sleeping too much
* Thoughts of self-harm or harm to the baby

Unlike the "baby blues", PPD is a serious condition that requires professional support. Partners, family members, and friends can play a crucial role in identifying these signs and encouraging new moms to seek help.

**Is it anxiety or OCD?**

While postpartum depression gets a lot of attention, many mothers also experience **postpartum anxiety or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)**. These conditions are marked by excessive worry or repetitive thoughts and actions, which may interfere with daily life. Signs of postpartum anxiety include:

* Constant worry about the baby's health and safety
* Feeling on edge or overly alert
* Physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat or nausea

Postpartum OCD may involve intrusive thoughts and the compulsion to perform specific actions repetitively, such as checking on the baby frequently or washing hands excessively.

If you or a loved one is experiencing these symptoms, know that they are treatable with the help of a mental health professional. Medshield Medical Scheme offers access to mental health services and a supportive network to help new mothers manage their mental well-being. If you're a Medshield member, don't hesitate to ask about the mental health resources available through your plan.

**Care and support for new moms**

New moms should focus on self-care to support both mom and baby's well-being. This includes resting when possible, eating nutritious meals, and setting small, achievable goals. Staying connected with others, such as joining moms' groups or the [Medshield Mom](https://medshieldmom.co.za/) platform, can help reduce feelings of isolation and provide additional wellness resources, like yoga and meditation guides. Medshield Mom is a free platform designed to support mothers through every stage of pregnancy and parenthood. From expert advice to physical and mental health resources, Medshield Mom has tools to empower moms to thrive during and after pregnancy. With access to wellness programmes, nutrition guidance, and a supportive community, new moms and their families can feel confident and well-supported as they embark on this beautiful journey.

Secondly, partners play a crucial role by sharing baby care responsibilities, encouraging open communication, and creating a supportive environment. Simple acts like helping with household tasks can make a big difference. It's also essential for partners to understand signs of postpartum mental health challenges so they can recognise when professional help might be needed. Medshield's educational resources can also assist with guidance.

Lastly, returning to work after childbirth can bring mixed emotions. Flexible work options, setting boundaries, and open communication with employers can ease this transition. Feelings of guilt or anxiety are normal but pursuing personal and professional goals can be beneficial for the family. Medshield's mental health services are available to support moms struggling with these emotions.

**Empowering Moms through Medshield Mind**

At Medshield, we recognise mental health as a fundamental element of overall health and well-being, influencing our ability to make decisions, build relationships, and engage with our environment. We encourage our members to prioritise self-care and seek professional help if they experience warning signs such as difficulty sleeping, concentrating, or losing interest in enjoyable activities.

Medshield has incorporated a new Mental Health Medicine benefit for 2025 in addition to the [new Medshield Mind](https://medshield.co.za/2025-products/2025-extra-value/) mental well-being platform. This platform is designed to bring mental health support to your fingertips, providing a comprehensive suite of resources accessible from your favourite devices. Join expert-led workshops, engage with interactive tools, and explore self-help resources that fit your lifestyle. With features like guided meditations and personalised content recommendations, Medshield Mind is your go-to hub for developing a healthier, more resilient mindset.

The postpartum period is a unique and challenging time. Every mother's journey is different. With proper support, open communication, and resources like Medshield Mom and Medshield Mind, moms can feel empowered to care for themselves and their little ones. Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength, and with the support of loved ones, healthcare providers, and valuable resources, every mom can confidently navigate this journey.

**FIN**

(850 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.