



2ND EDITION
NEWSLETTER
2023

Mark your calendar for our 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 27 June at 10am. Members will be able to join the meeting via video conferencing at one of the designated venues – to find out more visit www.engenmed.co.za.

HOW TO BECOME A MORNING EXERCISE PERSON

You don't have to catch worms to enjoy the merits of being an early bird. Exercising in the morning has many advantages; so, it's worth rearranging your daily schedule to fit it in. Here's why and how to give it a go.

It's winter - the perfect season to start the day with exercise. A 30-minute session is doable before breakfast, and morning exercise offers these great benefits:

It helps keep you mentally alert during the day

Research shows that exercise boosts blood flow to the brain, increasing the functionality of neurotransmitters involved in your brain's reasoning processes. This boost in brainpower can help you think faster and clearer during those long morning meetings and enhance your productivity throughout the day.

Exercise puts you in a better mood

When you start exerting yourself during exercise, your body releases hormones such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. These help regulate your mood, energy, motivation and attention. Exercise also releases endorphins, which help relieve pain and stress.

"In fact," says Discovery Vitality biokineticist Mari Leach, "it's been proven that people who exercise regularly, have lower depression and anxiety levels than their less active counterparts. Studies have also found that people prone to high anxiety but who are very active, are less likely to panic when compared to those with low activity levels. "So, hopefully, morning exercise can help you handle the rest of the day's stressors better, be it traffic or normal workday frustration."

It can help develop consistency and strong self-discipline

Scheduling your exercise session in the afternoon or evening makes it easier to procrastinate or cancel entirely. Your calendar can fill up quickly - other tasks take priority, or often it seems too tiring to train after a day's work. When you work out in the morning, you prioritise your health, and exercise becomes one less thing on your to-do list for the rest of the day.

Exercise boosts your metabolism

A study that looked at the effect of a 45-minute vigorous intensity exercise session, showed a significant elevation in post-exercise energy consumption that could last for up to 14 hours. This means that by putting in a solid exercise session in the morning, you'll burn more kilojoules throughout your day, and this can help you lose weight faster.

It's all good and well to know that morning exercise is beneficial, but putting words into practice can be difficult. While anyone can find excuses not to do it, it's worth the effort.

Give morning exercise a go and you may surprise yourself with how quickly it becomes a happy norm. As author Brian Tracy once said, "You can make excuses, or you can make progress." So, resolve to make progress this winter by setting that alarm right away!

Mari's top 8 tips to becoming a morning exerciser

1. Eat a healthy meal the night before to ensure you have enough energy for your morning workout.
2. The blue light that LED screens give off can slow or stop the production of melatonin, the hormone that tells our brain that it's time for bed. Use a blue light filter on your phone in the evenings and stay away from bright lights and screens at least an hour before bedtime - this will help shut down your melatonin levels so you can fall asleep faster.
3. It's obvious - go to bed earlier. Lying in bed isn't good enough if you're still watching or reading something. Ensure your bedroom is as dark and quiet as you can manage, try clear your mind, and take a few deep, full breaths to help you drift off faster.
4. Set out your exercise clothes the night before.
5. Ease into the habit of morning exercise by scheduling sessions on alternate days. Then start moving more sessions to the morning as you get used to the routine.
6. Give yourself one morning a week to sleep in for a while and work out in the afternoon, if you really struggle with repeated morning wake-up calls.
7. Don't press snooze on your alarm. Position your alarm on the other side of the room, forcing you to get up from bed to switch it off. When it wakes you, don't lie there debating whether to get up - the less you think about it, the better! Just heave yourself up and go. Or get yourself to just start dressing for the exercise - it gets you going and will oftentimes lead to following through with the exercise. And you'll feel much better afterwards to boot.
8. Remember to do a proper warm up at the start of your morning training session as your body temperature will be lower than in the afternoon.





TAKE CARE OF YOUR NECK AND BACK PAIN WITH OUR SPINAL CARE PROGRAMME

Back pain is one of the most common medical conditions for members of Engen Medical Benefit Fund. Appropriate out-of-hospital conservative management of back pain has proven to deliver good outcomes and could prevent the need for surgery.

We have introduced a Spinal Conservative Care programme and launched Spinal Surgery and Conservative Care Networks. This programme aims to support appropriate condition management for if you have back or neck pain.

You may qualify to join the programme

You can visit one of our healthcare professionals for an assessment to find out whether you meet the Fund's clinical criteria to join the programme or not.

To join the programme, the Conservative Care Network healthcare professional's clinical findings, reached after your assessment, must show that you qualify.

[Read more](#) about the Spinal Conservative Care Programme.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, you can call us on **0800 001 615**.

HOW TO PREAUTHORISE WHEN YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL

How to make sure your hospital admission is covered

Going to hospital is stressful, but the admin doesn't have to be. You might have to go to hospital for a planned procedure or in an emergency. Either way, we're here to help.

Your planned hospital stay

It's important to tell us about your hospital stay as soon as you can. Knowing exactly what we cover will reduce your stress, so that you can focus on getting better.

If your healthcare provider wants to admit you to hospital:

1. Ask who the healthcare practitioners (for example, doctors, specialists or surgeons) are who will look after you when you are in hospital and ask which hospital your doctor recommends.
2. Check if the Fund covers the condition, the treatment, and whether the healthcare professional and the hospital are on the Fund's Networks. You might have to go to another healthcare practitioner or hospital to get the best cover possible. Contact us if you are unsure, or if another healthcare practitioner will be looking after you in the hospital. This is to make sure that your healthcare practitioner is covered by the authorization we have given you.
3. Get authorisation from Engen Medical Benefit Fund. Phone **0800 001 615** as soon as you can, at least 48 hours before you go to hospital.
4. We will review the details, tell you what we will and will not pay for, and give you an authorisation number.
5. Take the authorisation number, your membership card and your ID book or smart ID card with you when you go to hospital.

If your admission is not planned and is an emergency

You can go to the nearest available hospital when it is an emergency.

The healthcare professional that is treating you, or the hospital, can obtain an authorisation from the Fund – as soon as possible after your admission. You, or any of your family members, can also contact the Fund to obtain authorisation. Before you call us, you will have to get details of your treatment from your healthcare professionals.

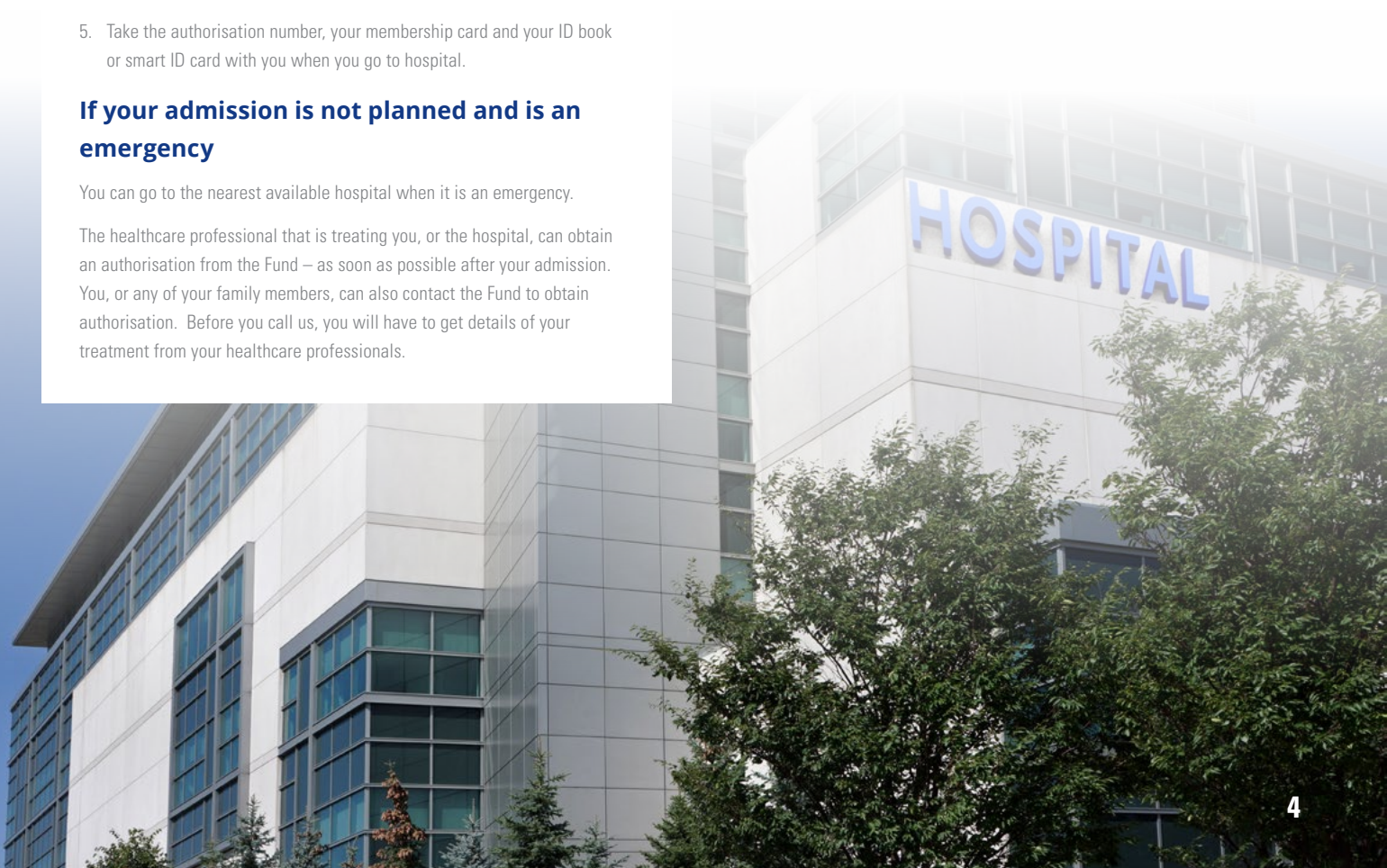
ER24 provides you with medical emergency transportation services.

If the unthinkable happens and you're faced with a medical emergency, like a car accident or a heart attack, there's only one number you need to remember: **084 124**.

ER 24 has over 200 emergency vehicles, as well as a fleet of fixed-wing and helicopter air ambulances. They also provide access to free telephonic advice from registered nurses and trauma counsellors.

Remember, in an emergency call 084 124 – the number is available 24/7.

- Dial 084 124.
- Give your name, and the telephone number you are calling from.
- Identify yourself as an Engen Medical Benefit Fund member.
- Give a brief description of what has happened.
- Give the address at which the incident happened, as well as the nearest landmark.
- The call centre controller will be able to provide you with emergency medical advice while the ambulance is on its way.
- Stay on the call until the controller has disconnected.



HYPERTENSION – THE SILENT KILLER YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Hypertension is a problem worldwide, and it is estimated that by 2025, there will be more than one and a half billion people in the world living with the condition.

What is hypertension?

Hypertension is high blood pressure. When blood flows inside blood vessels (arteries), blood pressure is the force of the flowing blood against the walls of the vessels. When this force is above a certain reading, blood pressure is high.

Blood pressure is measured by having a blood pressure meter (a sphygmomanometer) cuff put around your upper arm while you're sitting down, with your arm elevated so that the cuff is at the same level as your heart. To ensure an accurate reading, empty your bladder first and take off as many clothing layers as possible around your arm. The cuff is inflated rapidly, and then air is released from the cuff at a slower rate.

The person taking the measurement uses a stethoscope to listen for a specific knocking sound, which indicates your systolic pressure (when the heart beats and pumps out blood). When the knocking sound disappears, they listen for the diastolic pressure (between heartbeats).

An example of a blood pressure reading is 120/80 mmHg – 120 being the systolic pressure, and 80 the diastolic pressure. Blood pressure ranges are categorised as follows for adults:

- Normal or healthy blood pressure: 120/80
- Prehypertension: 120 to 139 systolic or 80 to 89 diastolic
- Stage 1 hypertension: 140 to 159 systolic or 90 to 99 diastolic
- Stage 2 hypertension: Over 160 systolic or over 100 diastolic

Hypertension often has no symptoms

This means that you could be living with hypertension and not know it. This is bad because damage to your internal organs and blood vessels could be happening without you realising it. That is why it is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly to detect hypertension as early as possible. If treatment is started early, your risk of permanent damage is decreased.

Why is hypertension a problem?

High blood pressure can lead to numerous health issues, such as headaches, disturbances of vision, nausea and vomiting. It can even affect your levels of consciousness, lead to sleeplessness and in severe cases, seizures. It can cause narrowing of the blood vessels, and heart disease, and it can lead to sudden heart attack or stroke, which can be fatal.

When symptoms do occur, they vary

Shortness of breath, a pounding heartbeat, fatigue, chest pain, dizziness, blood in the urine and nosebleeds can point to high blood pressure, but also to other problems. If you experience any of these symptoms for an extended period, rather get to your doctor as soon as possible

Treatment for hypertension

If a doctor finds that your blood pressure is elevated, you may have to return for several visits for the doctor to establish with certainty that the reading remains high.

For prehypertension, the doctor will most likely encourage you to make some lifestyle changes to improve your blood pressure. Lifestyle changes could include eating a healthier diet, getting more exercise, and controlling stress.

For stage 1 and stage 2 hypertension, treatment will include prescription medicine in addition to lifestyle changes.

