



Our health matters

Description

International awareness days and weeks are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilise resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements.

In first three months of 2024 we celebrated a number of health days to bring awareness to specific health conditions and how we can live our healthiest lives.

World Braille Day

(4 January)

World Braille Day commemorates the birthday of Louis Braille, who invented the Braille system of reading and writing for people who are blind or have vision impairment. Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots to represent each letter and number.

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World Cancer Day

(4 February)

World Cancer Day aims to bring global awareness to cancer. This year's theme – **Together, we challenge those in power** – encompasses the global demand for leaders to prioritise and invest in cancer prevention and care. Remember that early detection is key to a better outcome, so please have regular medical check-ups!

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Pregnancy Awareness Week

(6-10 February)

Pregnancy Awareness Week aims to improve education about pregnancy in order to promote healthy pregnancy and safe motherhood. It highlights the importance for expectant mothers to attend antenatal care as soon as possible within their first trimester. Remember that pregnancy and childbirth are included in Prescribed Minimum Benefits.

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Healthy lifestyle Awareness Month

(February)

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is often the first defence in the fight against preventable lifestyle diseases. Healthy Lifestyle Awareness Month is observed to encourage awareness of the five basic elements of a healthy lifestyle:

1. Good nutrition
2. Regular physical activity
3. Tobacco control
4. Interventions against alcohol and substance abuse
5. Safe sexual behaviour

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International Wheelchair Day

(1 March)

International Wheelchair Day promotes a more positive perception of wheelchair users and addresses barriers encountered in their daily lives. It also highlights the achievements and contributions of individuals with disabilities. Read our article, [Creating Inclusivity](#), about Zenzele Dlamini, a call centre agent at Gems Contributions and Debt Management: Medscheme, who gives us some insight into the needs of employees using wheelchairs.

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World Obesity Day

(4 March)

World Obesity Day calls for unified action across sectors in response to the obesity crisis. Obesity can lead to a number of preventable lifestyle diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. In SA, one in eight children is overweight, highlighting the need for healthy eating and regular exercise.

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World Tuberculosis Day

(24 March)

World TB Day aims to educate the public about the impact of TB around the world. This year's theme – **Yes! We can end TB!** – conveys a message of hope that turning the tide against the TB epidemic is possible through high-level leadership, increased investments, and faster integration of new World Health Organisation recommendations.

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World Bipolar Day

(30 March)

World Bipolar Day is celebrated on the birthday of the Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh, who was retrospectively diagnosed with this mental condition years after his death. It aims to encourage understanding about what bipolar disorder is – and isn't – and to banish the stigma around mental health issues. Bipolar disorder is characterised by mood swings that range from extreme highs (mania) to extreme lows (depression).

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World Health Day

(07 April)

Worldwide, the right to health is increasingly coming under threat. This is caused by amongst others conflict, climate crisis and economic hardship. This year's theme, **My Health, My Right**, champions the right of everyone, everywhere to have access to health services, education, and information, as well as safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition, quality housing, decent working and environmental conditions, and freedom from discrimination.

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Category

1. OUR WELLNESS

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