

March: Winter wellness – prepare your immune system to combat flu and lung infections

As the seasons change, so does the risk of flu and serious lung infections like pneumonia. Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you, especially if you have a chronic condition; older adults are also at a higher risk of complications from respiratory infections.

Many members vaccinate religiously; some choose not to get vaccinated. The decision is, of course, yours.

Anglo Medical Scheme follows recommendations from global organisations such as the World Health Organization, and, therefore, pays for recommended vaccinations, as we believe that prevention is better than cure. You will find more information about our preventative care benefits in your Benefit Guide or by searching for 'preventative care' on www.angloms.co.za.

Why vaccinate?

- Reduces the risk of severe illness, hospitalisation, and complications.
- Helps protect vulnerable family members and the community.
- Keeps you healthier and able to manage existing health conditions more effectively.

Who should vaccinate?

- **Babies and young children:** Infants and toddlers are more vulnerable to severe flu complications. The flu vaccine is recommended for children from six months old. Parents and caregivers can also be vaccinated to help protect newborns.
- **Adults with chronic conditions:** If you have chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma, heart disease, or a weakened immune system, the vaccines can help prevent serious illness and hospitalisation.
- **Older adults (60+):** Aging increases the risk of flu-related complications; vaccination can assist to stay healthy in the long-term.
- **People living in care facilities** like old-age homes or chronic care and rehabilitation institutions.
- **Pregnant women:** vaccination helps protect both mother and baby, reducing the risk of flu-related complications during pregnancy.

How are the flu and pneumococcal vaccines funded by AMS?

On the Value Care Plan all beneficiaries are entitled to one flu vaccination per annum.

On the Standard and Managed Care Plan, the Scheme funds one flu vaccination and one consultation per beneficiary per annum and two pneumococcal vaccinations and consultations per beneficiary over the age of 55 per lifetime. The Scheme will fund the cost of your flu and pneumococcal vaccines and consultations which means that your out of hospital benefits or Medical Savings Account (MSA) will not be affected.

What else can I do to boost my immune system?

You know all of the below, but nevertheless, here is your checklist:

Maintain a nutrient-rich diet

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins C and E.
- Incorporate immune-boosting foods like garlic, ginger, turmeric, and yogurt (for probiotics).
- Ensure adequate protein intake (lean meats, eggs, legumes) to support immune function.

Stay hydrated

- Drink enough water to keep mucous membranes moist, which helps defend against infections.
- Herbal teas (like ginger or chamomile) can also provide warmth and immune support.

Get enough sleep

- Aim for 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep per night, as rest is essential for immune function.

Exercise regularly

- Moderate physical activity (such as walking, yoga, or strength training) helps circulate immune cells.

Manage stress

- Practice relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing, or mindfulness.
- Engage in hobbies or social activities that bring joy.

Supplement wisely

- Consider vitamin D (especially if you get limited sun exposure).
- Zinc and probiotics may also help support immunity.
- Always consult a healthcare provider before taking supplements.

Practice good hygiene

- Wash hands frequently to reduce germ transmission.
- Keep household surfaces clean and avoid close contact with sick individuals.

MediBrief articles are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider.

Have you downloaded the Anglo Medical Scheme App yet?

Download the Anglo Medical Scheme App to access information about your benefits, plan, and membership – anywhere, anytime. More info available at www.angloms.co.za/portal/ams/anglo-medical-scheme-app.

Reminder: Nominate your candidate for the Disputes Committee

You have until 7 May 2025 to send your nominations for the Schemes' Disputes Committee to principalofficer@angloms.co.za. Include both your membership number and the membership number of your Nominee, along with a brief explanation of why you believe the Nominee is a good fit. Nominees must be members of AMS. Trustees, members serving on Scheme Committees, administrator employees, and Scheme officers are not eligible to serve on the Disputes Committee.

Member story: AMS, a lifeline in times of need

For many AMS members, the Scheme is more than just a medical scheme – it's a trusted partner in their healthcare journey. One of our members, who has been with AMS for five years, recently shared how the Scheme has supported them through life's toughest moments.

In 2020, an accident in their hometown of Queenstown left them with a fractured leg. Initially taken to a public hospital while unconscious, they reached out to AMS as soon as they regained consciousness. "I called AMS for an ambulance, and I was transferred to the best hospital in Queenstown, even though I was on Value Care."

Later that year, a severe stomach ache led them to a hospital that was not in their network. Using the AMS App, they quickly found an alternative. "That's when I realised the importance of the AMS App because when I opened the app and searched the hospitals that were in my network, I saw there was one close by."

In 2022, their journey with AMS took another unexpected turn when they were shot and severely injured. Unable to call for assistance themselves, their family reached out to AMS on their behalf. "They never questioned who was calling on my behalf, but approved whatever was necessary for my recovery," they share.

During their recovery, they needed a wheelchair, which was not covered by the Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMB). "AMS advised me to apply for Ex Gratia funding. Normally, there is a wait, but AMS treated my case as urgent. Within two weeks, my request was approved, and I got a wheelchair."

AMS also ensured the approval of procedures for an operation on their hand. "AMS approved everything that was needed, and in that way, I am still grateful and happy with the services and benefits I am getting from AMS."

The member goes on to explain that, while they are grateful for AMS's support, they wish that their nerve pain medication could be covered without a co-payment. While we strive to cover all the healthcare needs of our members, we must also balance affordability with long-term sustainability. Although it is not always possible to fund every medical expense, our commitment remains unwavering: ensuring access to quality healthcare when it matters most.

Do you have a story about how AMS has supported you? We would love to hear from you. Share your experience for a chance to be featured in a future newsletter!

Virtual AGM update

With this MediBrief you are receiving the notice and proxy form for our virtual AGM, scheduled for 21 May 2025. To participate, please respond as soon as possible, but not later than 14 May 2025. Let us know if you will be attending or send your apologies, and/or appoint a proxy to represent you during the AGM. You can use the form provided today, or use our new, convenient online response form on <https://reg.lumiengage.com/ams-agm-2025/rsvp/Site/Register>.

Do you have membership or Scheme questions? Contact us on the numbers and addresses listed here:

Value Care Plan: 0861 665 665 | anglo@primecure.co.za | Standard and Managed Care Plans: 0860 222 633 | member@angloms.co.za and claims@angloms.co.za

Visit www.angloms.co.za to learn more about your Scheme and benefits. Log in and find all previous MediBrief editions under My Documents > Knowledge Library