

EVERY BEAT COUNTS – BUT WHAT MAKES YOUR HEART BEAT FASTER?

Maybe it's your kid sprinting across the finish line. Some news you've been hoping to hear. The last stretch of a hard hike, or the first crack of thunder before a spring storm. Life's most exhilarating moments tend to arrive with a quickened pulse (and maybe a little victory dance).

Your heart has carried you through times like these and every ordinary second in between, from the morning commute to the queue at the shops. While you sleep, work out, or make plans for the future – in fact, even before you were born – it has kept beating. And while you might conscientiously give your other muscles a rest (leg day, we see you), this one just keeps going.

So, this Heart Awareness Month, let's celebrate our most important muscle. Because every beat counts – the ones that skip, the ones that race and the millions of quiet ones in between. All are well worth looking after.

SMALL CHOICES, BIG INVESTMENT

Happily, looking after your heart doesn't require a dramatic life overhaul or hours you don't have. It comes down to a handful of small daily habits that add up to a literal lifetime investment with major returns.

- ✓ **Move in the margins of life.** You don't need a custom padel racket or the latest online fitness subscription, just regular movement. Take the stairs, park a little further away, walk while you're on a call, ride your bike to brunch... You get the idea. It all counts towards the 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week your heart loves, and it needn't happen all at once.
- ✓ **Colour your plate.** Time to make like a liberated artist. The more colour on your plate, the better. Reach for fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and lean protein, and go easy on deep-fried, salty and sugary treats. Small, frequent swaps beat a strict diet you'll abandon by Wednesday.
- ✓ **Ease off the salt.** Much of the salt we eat is hiding in processed foods and convenience meals. Taste before you season and give your taste buds time to recalibrate. Your cardiovascular system will thank you.
- ✓ **Unwind on purpose.** Ongoing stress can take a toll on your health, so protecting a little downtime isn't a luxury; it's maintenance. A short walk, a phone-free break or a quiet moment with a good book – whatever lets you exhale.
- ✓ **Rethink the after-work drink.** If you drink alcohol, remember that less is better for your health. We're not aiming for a gleaming halo here – just conscious decision-making.
- ✓ **If you smoke, know this.** Quitting is one of the most important steps you can take for your heart, and the benefits start almost immediately. If you've been meaning to stop, now is the time.

And no, there's no dramatic climax here. That's the point. Done regularly, the small stuff is what keeps the beats coming.

WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

The easiest place to start is a quick pharmacy wellness screening: blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose and BMI. It takes minutes, gives you a snapshot of important cardiovascular risk factors, and here's the best part: it's already covered on every OMSMAF plan, separate from your day-to-day benefits. Already yours, already paid for, and easy to get done at the Local Choice Pharmacy at Mutual Park or at Clicks, Dis-Chem, or Medirite.

A LITTLE EXTRA SUPPORT, WHENEVER YOU NEED IT

- ✓ **Eat with your heart in mind.** Need a little help putting healthy eating into practice? Your OMSMAF cover includes access to a registered dietitian through the Nutritional Assessment and Healthy Eating Plan, giving you real, personalised guidance, not another fad. Want the full low-down? Find out more about your Nutritional Assessment and Healthy Eating Plan Benefit, what's included and how to activate it.
- ✓ **Want the full low-down?** Find out more about your Nutritional Assessment and Healthy Eating Plan Benefit, what's included and how to activate it.
- ✓ **Already managing a heart condition?** You're not on your own. The Active Disease Risk Management Programme puts a caring team of nurses in your corner, offering practical support to help you keep doing the things that make your heart race in a good way. Simply contact **0860 100 076** or diseasemanagement@omsmaf.co.za.

KEEP THE BEATS COMING

Your heart has been quietly keeping count your whole life, through every laugh, every leap, every close call, every wonderfully uneventful Friday. It's not done yet, and neither are you.

This September, make a point of booking the screening you keep putting off. Take the stairs. Colour your plate. Make the beats count now and keep them coming tomorrow.

Because every beat counts, and yours deserve to last.

Your pharmacy wellness screening is covered under all OMSMAF plans at the Local Choice Pharmacy at Mutual Park, Clicks, Dis-Chem, or Medirite.

Stay well out there.

Take care,
Team OMSMAF

Healthcare with Heart.



VISION

To be the medical scheme of choice for the Old Mutual Group.

MISSION

To be an affordable medical scheme that guarantees best-of-class member experience, value and quality.



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