

Focus on ulcerative colitis

Ulcerative colitis is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). A chronic disease of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract that causes inflammation and sores, called ulcers, on the inner lining of the large intestine.

Crohn's disease and microscopic colitis are other common IBDs. Symptoms of ulcerative colitis range from mild to severe and develop gradually, becoming worse over time. Those with the condition regularly experience periods of remission, during which they are symptom free. The goal of treatment is to extend these intervals of remission.

Most people with ulcerative colitis receive care from a gastroenterologist, a doctor who specialises in digestive diseases.

The signs and symptoms of ulcerative colitis

Symptoms vary depending on the site and severity of the inflammation. The most common are diarrhoea with blood or pus and abdominal discomfort. Other signs and symptoms include:

- An urgent need for a bowel movement
- Feeling tired
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Anaemia - a condition in which the body has fewer red blood cells than normal

Less common symptoms include:

- Joint pain or soreness
- Eye irritation
- Certain rashes.

Possible causes of ulcerative colitis

The exact cause of ulcerative colitis is unknown. Researchers believe the following may play a role:

- Overactive intestinal immune system
- Genes
- Environment

How to register on the chronic programme

Once you have been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, please ask your doctor to contact our Chronic Medicine Department on **0860 11 78 59** to register you on the Chronic Medicine Management Programme.



The chronic medicine consultant will liaise with your doctor regarding your treatment. Once the diagnostic criteria have been met and blood results have been submitted, the treatment will be approved. We will let you know whether the treatment falls within the Momentum Medical Scheme formulary or if you will need to pay a co-payment.

Once you receive authorisation, you can take your prescription to your designated service provider to get your medication, and the claim can be submitted. A designated service provider (DSP) is a healthcare provider (doctor, pharmacist, hospital, etc.) that is a medical scheme's first choice when its members require diagnosis, treatment or care for a Prescribed Minimum Benefit condition. If you voluntarily choose not to use the DSP and choose to rather use a different hospital, doctor or pharmacy, we may charge a co-payment.

The authorisation usually expires after 12 months. If there is no change in the medicine you need to take, your doctor or pharmacist can contact us on **0860 11 78 59** to renew the authorisation. The same process applies when there are any changes or additions to your authorisation.

For more on your chronic benefits and where to obtain chronic medicine and treatment, [click here](#).

Hospitalisation

If you need to be hospitalised for ulcerative colitis or any of its complications, contact us via the web chat facility on momentummedicalscheme.co.za, email us at preauthorisation@momentumhealth.co.za, send us a WhatsApp message on **+27 860 11 78 59** or call us on **0860 11 78 59** to obtain pre-authorisation. We will allocate a case manager to follow up regarding your hospital stay.

Treatment plan

Once you are registered on the programme, you will have access to a treatment plan, which may include cover for tests, doctors' visits or other benefits considered medically necessary by your doctor – these will be reviewed by our clinical team to ensure appropriateness.

Compliance

You need to:

- obtain your chronic medication on a monthly basis,
- make sure that you take your medication according to the dosage and quantity prescribed by your doctor, and
- make sure that you do not miss a dose - this is not only important for compliance, but it can have serious implications for your health and wellbeing.

Please make sure your claims have the appropriate ICD-10 code

It is important for all claims to include the appropriate ICD-10 codes (diagnostic codes), so we can identify the claim correctly and pay it from the Chronic Benefit.

**We may pay claims from your Day-to-day Benefits if:**

- The claims are submitted without the relevant ICD-10 codes.
- You have exceeded the frequency limit on consultations or tests.
- The treatment is not clinically appropriate.

Contact us

You can contact us via the web chat facility on momentummedicalscheme.co.za, email us at member@momentumhealth.co.za, send us a WhatsApp message on **+27 860 11 78 59** or call us on **0860 11 78 59**.

Glossary of terms

Designated service providers: Momentum Medical Scheme uses a network of designated service providers, such as Associated GPs and Specialists, as well as State facilities, depending on the circumstances, to diagnose and treat our members for the Prescribed Minimum Benefits.

A **formulary** is a list of medicines covered on your option, from which a doctor can prescribe the appropriate medication for your chronic condition.

ICD-10 is the diagnosis code.

Prescribed Minimum Benefits is a list of benefits for which all medical schemes in South Africa have to provide cover in terms of the Medical Schemes Act 131 of 1998 and the Regulations thereto. In order to access these benefits:

- Your medical condition must qualify for cover and be part of the defined list of Prescribed Minimum Benefit conditions.
- The treatment needed must match the treatments in the defined benefits.
- You must use the Scheme's Designated Service Providers. See the definition of Designated Service Providers on page 2 for more information.

If you voluntarily choose to use non-designated service providers, the Scheme will pay benefits up to the Momentum Medical Scheme Rate and relevant co-payments will apply. If you use non-designated service providers in cases of an emergency medical condition, it is deemed involuntary and co-payments are therefore waived.

If your medical condition and treatment do not meet the above criteria to access these benefits, we will pay according to the benefits on your chosen benefit option.