

Focus on Crohn's disease

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It causes inflammation of the lining of your digestive tract, which can lead to abdominal pain, severe diarrhoea, fatigue, weight loss and malnutrition. Inflammation caused by Crohn's disease can involve different areas of the digestive tract in different people. The inflammation caused by Crohn's disease often spreads deep into the layers of affected bowel tissue. Crohn's disease can be both painful and debilitating and sometimes may lead to life-threatening complications.

The signs and symptoms of Crohn's disease

- **Diarrhoea** is a common problem for people with Crohn's disease. Intensified intestinal cramping can also contribute to loose stools.
- **Fever and fatigue** - many people with Crohn's disease experience a low-grade fever, likely due to inflammation or infection. You may also feel tired or have low energy.
- **Abdominal pain and cramping** - inflammation and ulceration can affect the normal movement of contents through your digestive tract and may lead to pain and cramping. You may experience anything from slight discomfort to severe pain, including nausea and vomiting.
- **Blood in your stool** - you might notice bright red blood in the toilet bowl or darker blood mixed with your stool. You can also have bleeding you don't see (occult blood).
- **Mouth sores** - you may have ulcers in your mouth similar to canker sores.
- **Reduced appetite and weight loss** - abdominal pain and cramping and the inflammatory reaction in the wall of your bowel can affect both your appetite and your ability to digest and absorb food.
- **Perianal disease** - you might have pain or drainage near or around the anus due to inflammation from a tunnel into the skin (fistula).
- **Inflammation** of the skin, eyes and joints; inflammation of the liver or bile ducts and/or delayed growth or sexual development in children may exist in people with severe Crohn's disease.

Possible causes of Crohn's disease

The exact cause of Crohn's disease is unknown. It is a condition that occurs when your body's immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys healthy body tissue (autoimmune disorder).

- **Immune system** - it is possible that a virus or bacterium may trigger Crohn's disease. When your immune system tries to fight off the invading microorganism, an abnormal immune response causes the immune system to attack the cells in the digestive tract too.
- **Heredity** - Crohn's is more common in people who have family members with the disease, so genes may play a role in making people more susceptible. However, most people with Crohn's disease don't have a family history of the disease.



When to see a doctor

- Abdominal pain
- Blood in stool
- Ongoing bouts of diarrhoea that do not respond to over-the-counter medication
- Unexplained fever lasting more than a day or two
- Unexplained weight loss.

How to register on the chronic programme

Once you have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, 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 benefit consultant will liaise with your doctor regarding your treatment. Once the diagnostic criteria have been met and relevant blood results have been submitted, the treatment will be approved.

We will let you know whether the treatment falls within the Momentum Medical Scheme Reference Price. If the cost is greater than the Momentum Medical Scheme Reference Price, you will need to pay the difference.

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, a co-payment may apply.

The authorisation of your prescription is valid for 6 months. Your treating doctor will review your chronic condition 6-monthly and update your prescription when required.

- If there are no changes to the medication and/or diagnosis, the prescription can be sent directly to your DSP pharmacy.
- If there is a change to your medication prescription and/or diagnosis, then your doctor or pharmacist can contact us on **0860 11 78 59** to review the changes and renew the 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 Crohn's disease complications, log in to the **Momentum App**, contact us via the web chat facility on momentummedicalscheme.co.za, email us at preauthorisation@momentumhealth.co.za, send us a WhatsApp message or call us on **0860 11 78 59** to request 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 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 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.