

# melomag

Winter 2022 | Issue 43



FREE  
HEALTH  
GUIDE



ENDOMETRIOSIS – MORE THAN  
PAINFUL PERIODS... **09**

FACTS AND TRUTHS  
ABOUT VAPING **20**

COVID-19 VACCINATION  
AND PREGNANCY **24**

ADVANCED  
**STATE OF THE  
ART FACILITIES** AT  
YOUR DOORSTEP.



**MELOMED BELLVILLE**

Cnr Voortrekker & AJ West Street  
T 021 948 81 31



**MELOMED GATESVILLE**

Clinic Road, Gatesville  
T 021 637 8100



**MELOMED TOKAI**

Cnr Keyesers & Main Road  
T 021 764 7500



**MELOMED RICHARDS BAY**

John Ross Eco Junction  
T 035 791 5300



**MELOMED MITCHELLS PLAIN**

Symphony Walk, Town Centre  
T 021 392 3126



# BOOK YOUR MATERNITY TOUR

Our Melomed Gatesville maternity ward is now complete and boasts a beautiful setting - ideal for a wonderful birthing experience. **The unit has been designed with a gentle, modern and soothing colour scheme.**



**Book your hospital tour today.**

Contact the client service officer on **021 637 8100** or email **mgcso1@melomed.co.za** or **mgcso3@melomed.co.za**



Live. Learn. Treat.  
*Today, for tomorrow.*

[www.pharmadynamics.co.za](http://www.pharmadynamics.co.za)

**CUSTOMER CARE LINE** 0860 PHARMA (742 762) /+2721 707 7000 **Fax** 021 701 5898  
1st Floor, Steenberg Office Park, Silverwood Close, Steenberg Office Park, Westlake, Cape Town 7945



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 02 **New & Now:** Health News and Views
- 04 **MeloNews:** International Nurses Day
- 06 **Health Check:** Sleep Issues and Chronic Kidney Disease
- 09 **All About:** Endometriosis – More than Painful Periods...
- 14 **Need to Know:** Let's Talk Mental Health
- 18 **Infographic:** A Day that Leads to Your Best Night's Sleep
- 20 **Know it All:** Facts and Truths About Vaping
- 24 **Health Advice:** COVID-19 Vaccination and Pregnancy
- 26 **Travel:** Sleeping with the Fishes
- 28 **Recipes:** Crispy Fish and Chunky Chips
- 30 **House Call:** Dr Thalia Isaacs



HEALTH BYTES

**PUBLISHER:**  
Health Bytes CC  
**CONTACT:**  
christa@health-bytes.co.za  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER:**  
Marius Laubser  
**TEL:** 021 913 0504  
**PRINTING:** Kadimah

**INDEMNITY:** The information contained in *Melomag* is intended for general informational and educational purposes only, and not to replace professional medical advice. Persons requiring any medical advice or treatment should consult their relevant qualified healthcare professional. The publisher cannot accept any responsibility for any act, omission, loss, damage, or the consequences thereof caused by reliance by any person upon the information contained in the publication. The information included in *Melomag* is subject to copyright and all rights are reserved. The information may not be sold, resold, transmitted or otherwise made available or disseminated in any manner via any media to third parties unless the prior written consent of the publisher has been obtained.

# HEALTH NEWS AND VIEWS

## WHAT IS BIGOREXIA?

Bigorexia, also known as muscle dysmorphia, is a health condition, especially among teenage boys, that can cause you to think constantly about building muscle on your body i.e., bulking up. It is characterised by excessive weightlifting, a preoccupation with not feeling muscular enough and a strict adherence to eating foods that lower weight and build muscle. The condition can also lead young men to become obsessed with their appearance, checking themselves in the mirror either constantly or not at all. Bigorexia appears to be on the rise. While it is commonly associated with young men, it can impact people of all genders, ages, and backgrounds. Even if there is a long history of celebrating muscled physiques, the social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram fuels this disrupted view young men have about their bodies.

### Muscle dysmorphia can look like many things, including:

- Spending hours at the gym, pushing your body far beyond its limits, then feeling compelled to return and do it again the very next day.
- Following diets on a path to cutting weight and adding muscle that never seems to end.
- Hating your body and feeling like these perceived short comings are equally clear to anyone who sees you.

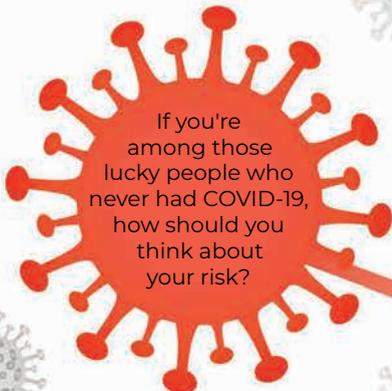
### When left untreated, bigorexia can escalate and lead to:

- steroid misuse
- depression
- thoughts of suicide

There is help and support for you if you are living with muscle dysmorphia. A mental health provider can get you started on a treatment plan, and self-care changes can get your symptoms under control. ■

Source: [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com),  
[www.healthline.com/health](http://www.healthline.com/health)



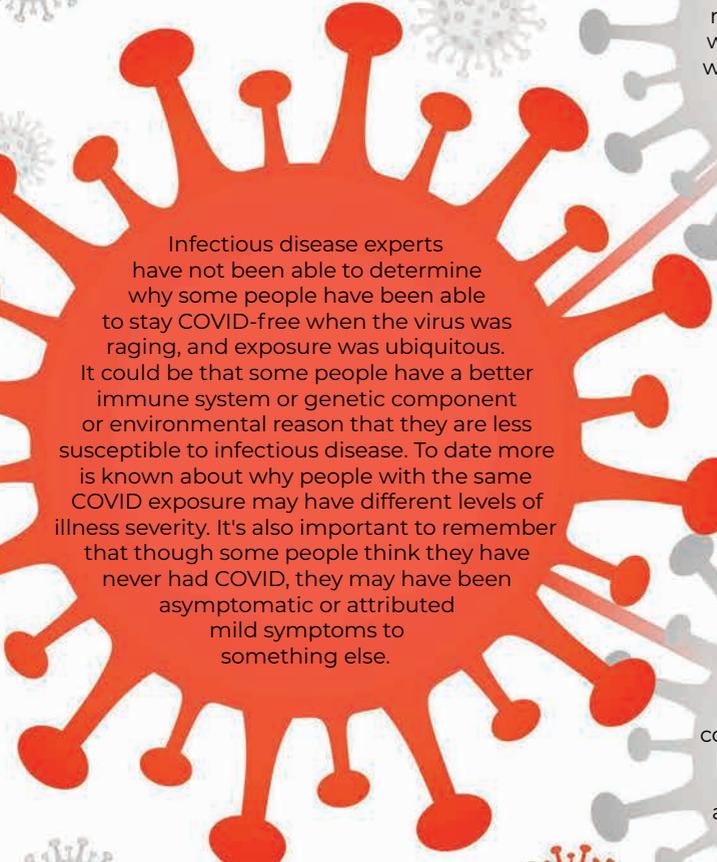


If you're among those lucky people who never had COVID-19, how should you think about your risk?

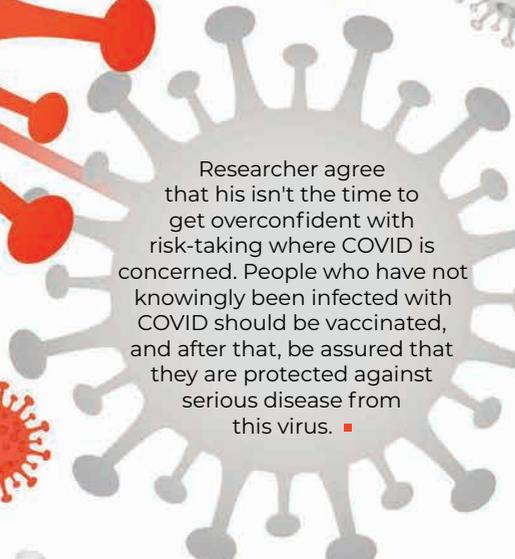
## If You've Never Had COVID, Should You Relax or Worry?



With mask mandates lifting, and outdoor venues reopening should those who have so far escaped worry more, or less about their risk than their previously infected counterparts?



Infectious disease experts have not been able to determine why some people have been able to stay COVID-free when the virus was raging, and exposure was ubiquitous. It could be that some people have a better immune system or genetic component or environmental reason that they are less susceptible to infectious disease. To date more is known about why people with the same COVID exposure may have different levels of illness severity. It's also important to remember that though some people think they have never had COVID, they may have been asymptomatic or attributed mild symptoms to something else.



Researchers agree that it isn't the time to get overconfident with risk-taking where COVID is concerned. People who have not knowingly been infected with COVID should be vaccinated, and after that, be assured that they are protected against serious disease from this virus. ■

Sources: [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com)

# INTERNATIONAL **NURSES DAY**

International Nurses' Day is celebrated annually on 12 May, the anniversary of the founder of modern day nursing, Florence Nightingale's birthday.

## Melomed **Bellville**



## Melomed **Gatesville**



## Melomed **Mitchell's Plain**



## Melomed **Richards Bay**

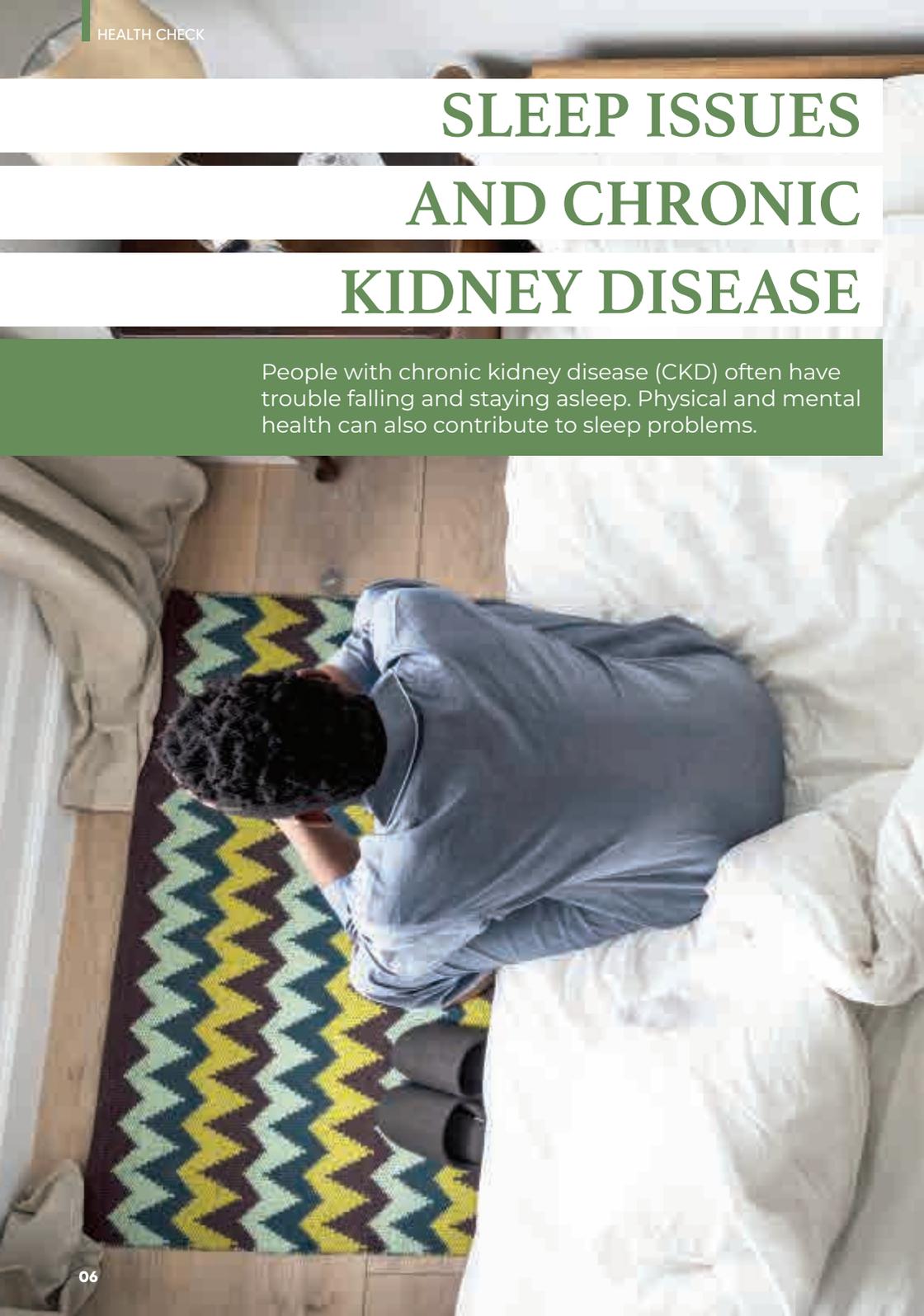


## Melomed **Tokai**



# SLEEP ISSUES AND CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

People with chronic kidney disease (CKD) often have trouble falling and staying asleep. Physical and mental health can also contribute to sleep problems.



## SOME COMMON CAUSES FOR DISRUPTED SLEEP PATTERNS IN KIDNEY DISEASE.



### Restless leg syndrome

Restless leg syndrome (RLS) often occurs when the legs are at rest, such as when a person is sitting or lying in bed. The sensation varies from patient to patient. It can be irritating, itchy or painful. Some patients find that moving their legs makes the uncomfortable sensations lessen or go away entirely.

Doctors have determined that iron deficiency, caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, diabetes and certain medications can contribute to restless leg syndrome.



### Sleep apnea

Sleep apnea causes your breathing to be interrupted or stopped for more than 10 seconds while you're in a deep sleep. These non-breathing intervals are called apneas. Patients with sleep apnea often snore heavily. The snores continue until breathing is interrupted or stops,

which signals an apnea. The person will then snort or gasp to take in air and the snoring continues until the next apnea.

A doctor can determine if you have sleep apnea by conducting a physical exam and a sleep study.



### Inadequate dialysis clearance

A build up of waste in the blood can cause you to feel ill and uncomfortable.

This could make sleeping difficult. If you're on peritoneal dialysis (PD), your doctor will occasionally test your dialysate to make sure it is pulling enough waste and toxins from your body.



### Emotions

Worry, anxiety and sadness can keep you up at night. If your sadness, anxiety or depression lasts more than two weeks, tell your doctor immediately.



### Changes in your sleep pattern

Sometimes patients who have CKD are more tired than usual. They tend to fall asleep earlier than their normal bedtime or nap during the day. If you feel that a nap can help you, limit your nap time. Naps that last longer than an hour can disrupt your sleep cycle.



### Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant; it jump starts your body, making you feel more alert. Many people drink caffeinated beverages in the morning to wake up, and then reach for a late afternoon caffeine "pick me up." Unfortunately, too much caffeine late in the day can affect your ability to fall asleep at night. In the morning, the caffeine cycle starts again.

If you're having trouble sleeping, try reducing the amount of caffeine in your diet. Keep an accurate food diary to show your renal dietitian. >>

## TIPS FOR GETTING AND STAYING ASLEEP

Getting enough sleep helps us stay healthy. Having trouble sleeping is very common for people on dialysis. Going through personal or professional challenges can cause insomnia or trouble sleeping as well. Try out these tips if you experience sleeplessness:



### Expend energy during the day with exercise

Exercise can help you feel tired so that you can fall asleep faster and sleep soundly. Ask your doctor about starting an exercise program. They can recommend a program based on your physical abilities and current state of health.



### Find ways to relax before bedtime

Relaxing is an important part of getting to sleep. Find a light activity that you can enjoy before bedtime.



### Adjust your sleep clock

You can train your body to get the right amount of sleep each night. This means keeping to a sleep schedule. You should go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning.



### Cut back on caffeine, alcohol and tobacco

Caffeine and nicotine (found in tobacco) can keep you awake longer than you wish. Cutting back can help you return to normal sleep patterns. Try limiting your caffeine intake to 2 cups a day before noon and avoid smoking before bedtime or during the night. And limit your alcohol intake, especially before bedtime, because it can disrupt your sleep.



### Limit your nap times

Too long of a nap can mean you won't be able to fall asleep later that night. Try to limit the number of naps and the amount of time you sleep during the day.



### Comfortable surroundings can mean a sounder night's sleep

A comfortable bed and bedding can lessen the amount of times you get up during the night. A darkened, quiet room will have fewer distractions to wake you up.

**If you still have trouble sleeping, or if you experience insomnia for a week or more, tell your doctor. Adequate rest is an important part in your CKD treatment. ■**



**MELOMED RENAL CARE (MRC):** For more information on the services offered by Melomed Renal Care, please contact any one of our three-dialysis units.

#### **Melomed Gatesville:**

Unit Leader: Cynthia Smith  
Call Phone: 060 993 3863  
Skype Phone: 010 824 9262

#### **Melomed Mitchells Plain:**

Unit Leader: Michelle Jenniker  
Call Phone: 066 487 2764  
Skype Phone: 010 824 9218

#### **Melomed Tokai:**

Unit Leader: Charmaine Pockbass  
Call Phone: 060 993 3885  
Skype Phone: 010 824 9219



# Endometriosis

*More than painful periods...*

## 1 IN 10 WOMEN HAVE ENDOMETRIOSIS

This is a pretty powerful statistic. It's similar to the number of people suffering from diabetes or asthma.

What if every time you had your period, you not only suffered from menstrual cramps, but also can't-get-out-of-bed off-the-charts severe pain?

You're not alone.

### WHAT IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis is a chronic condition where the tissue that lines the inside of the uterus (called the endometrium) grows on the outside of the uterus. These cells may relocate to the ovaries, bowel, fallopian tubes, bladder, or other parts of the pelvic region.

During your menstrual cycle, this displaced tissue thickens, breaks down, and bleeds. But, unlike the cells in the uterus that leave the body through menstruation, the blood from the cells outside of the uterus has no way of escaping and becomes trapped. The result is inflammation and the formation of cysts, adhesions, and scar tissue (which can cause unbearable pain). >>



## HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

It takes an average of 10 years and 8 doctors to be diagnosed with endometriosis. The only way to truly diagnose endometriosis is with laparoscopic surgery, but doctors can usually make an educated guess without it.

A diagnosis is often made based on symptoms alone; women with particularly painful periods may already be on their doctor's radar. If you have concerns about your menstruation or painful periods, schedule a time to talk with your doctor or gynae as soon as possible. Your doctor can begin assessing the situation

and may be able to provide relief and treatment to make things more manageable.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Endometriosis is complex and difficult to diagnose, so it's important to know the early signs of this condition as well as treatments so you can, hopefully, get relief. It's often misdiagnosed as appendicitis, colon and ovarian cancer, fibroids, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and/or sexually transmitted diseases. That's why it's critical for women to know, understand, and be vocal about their symptoms. Education and awareness can lead to early detection.

# Symptoms



Painful periods (dysmenorrhea) and cramping before and during your menstrual period.



Pain with bowel movements or urination during your menstrual period.



Other signs and symptoms may include fatigue, diarrhoea, constipation, bloating, or nausea, especially during menstrual periods.



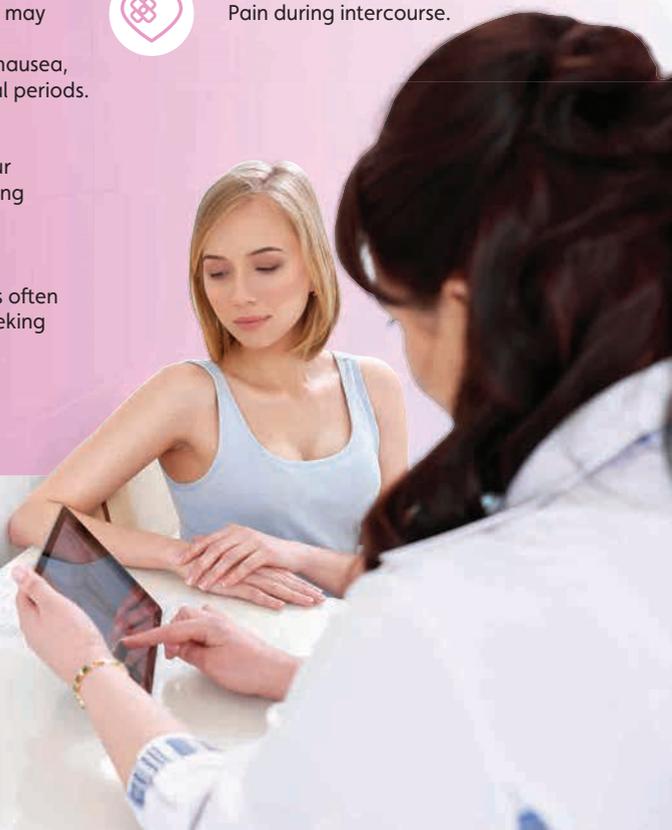
Pain during intercourse.



Heavy bleeding during your menstrual period or bleeding between periods.



Infertility - endometriosis is often first diagnosed in those seeking infertility treatment.



# Painful periods

Severe menstrual pain is NOT normal but not everyone with endometriosis has painful periods. Some people experience periods without pain but then experience other symptoms the rest of the month. 10% have no symptoms at all.

## How do I know if my periods are "painful?"

Do you miss school or work because of your period? Are there days where nothing helps for the pain? Do you plan your life around your period or just "push through" the pain? These would be considered signs of abnormally painful periods.



## TREATING AND MANAGING ENDOMETRIOSIS

There is no cure, only treatments to manage the condition, like anti-inflammatory medicine, painkillers, surgery to remove lesions, hormone treatment (e.g. the pill), and surgical options, including hysterectomy. And there are holistic wellness practices as well as diet and lifestyle tools in addition to hormones and medication to help you manage endometriosis.

### SURGICAL

Excision surgery is the gold standard for treatment. On the surgical front, the past 15 years have brought important advances. For instance, being able to operate laparoscopically rather than through open surgery speeds recovery time and helps surgeons locate errant cells. Surgery is rarely a cure, and treatments can cause life-altering side effects such as early menopause or suppressed ovulation.

### HOLISTICAL WELLNESS PRACTICES

Many women who have endometriosis symptoms also suffer from other chronic conditions, such as irritable bowel syndrome, interstitial cystitis, myofascial pain syndrome and more, necessitating a "holistic approach" to treatment.

There are many ways to manage the chronic pelvic pain of endometriosis, and both non-pharmacologic and self-care routines can be helpful. You can explore yoga, aerobic exercise, cognitive behavioural therapy, acupuncture, massage, diet and nutrition, stress management with your care team. >>

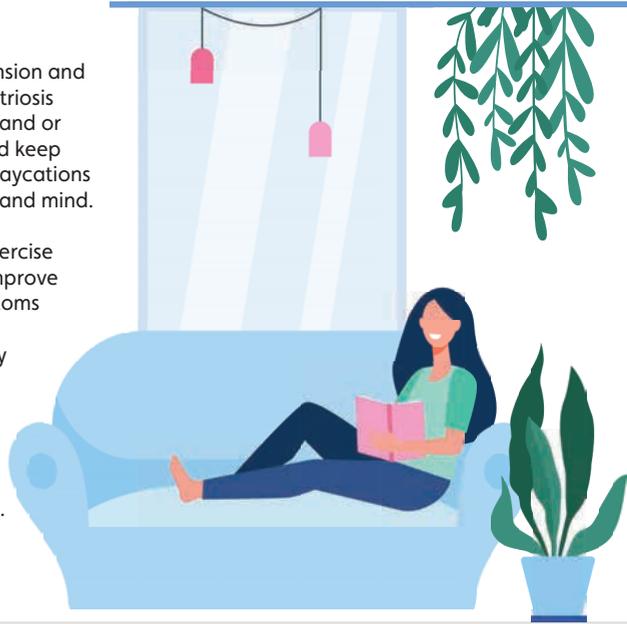


## REST AND RELAXATION

Stress and anxiety can promote muscle tension and inflammation that can aggravate endometriosis symptoms and pain. Take mini breaks to stand or sit (depending on what you do all day) and keep your body limber. Schedule vacations or staycations during which you can recharge your body and mind.

Pain and fatigue can make it difficult to exercise regularly. Physical activity, however, can improve overall health and help manage the symptoms of endometriosis. Moreover, exercise can improve sleep quality and increases energy levels. Exercise also may help reduce oestrogen levels, and subsequently endometriosis symptoms.

Do your research because these tools will work in different ways for every person. They will not stop your endometriosis from growing but can potentially help manage the pain and symptoms. ■



## How to prepare for a doctor's appointment.

To help your provider better understand your experience, consider bringing the following information to your appointment:



Your history of symptoms and, if applicable, past diagnoses or misdiagnoses



A record of your menstrual cycle and related symptoms (such as in a journal or an app)



A record of past gynecological surgeries, tests, and treatments



A list of your current medications



Family history of endometriosis or undiagnosed symptoms



A support person (such as a spouse, family member, or friend) who can help you take notes and advocate for you



Names and contact info for other health care professionals who provide you with care

*This article not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We encourage you to consult your doctor, specialist, or any other experienced healthcare professional with any questions you may have regarding your health.*

### Source:

[www.menstrual-matters.com](http://www.menstrual-matters.com) | [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org) | [www.endofound.org/endometriosis-a-to-z](http://www.endofound.org/endometriosis-a-to-z)  
[www.endometriosisaustralia.org](http://www.endometriosisaustralia.org) | [www.endographics.org/english](http://www.endographics.org/english)  
[www.swhr\\_resource/endometriosis-toolkit-a-patient-empowerment-guide](http://www.swhr_resource/endometriosis-toolkit-a-patient-empowerment-guide)



# MELOMED GYNAECOLOGISTS.

## **BELLVILLE**

Dr N Mtimkulu	021 950 8930
Dr MS Jacobs	021 945 2970
Dr M Magopa	021 945 3483
Dr T Isaacs	021 110 5070

## **TOKAI**

Dr A Hendricks	021 712 2691
Dr T Motsema	021 110 5940
Dr M Tisane	021 023 2046

## **GATESVILLE**

Dr N Allie	021 637 4323
Dr R Kader	021 638 2647

## **MITCHELLS PLAIN**

Dr D Karangwa	021 391 4297
Dr G Khobane	021 391 4132/3
Dr T Masina	021 110 5945

## **RICHARDS BAY**

Dr J Moodley	035 772 1581
Dr SJ Kunene	035 772 4848
Dr RK Misra	035 902 8010
Dr SMJ Zulu	035 791 5438

## **GATESVILLE & MITCHELLS PLAIN**

Dr A Davids, Dr MA Jeeva & Dr H Khamissa	
GATESVILLE:	021 637 1343/4
MITCHELLS PLAIN:	021 392 8141/0516

For more information contact us at [info@melomed.co.za](mailto:info@melomed.co.za)

# LET'S TALK MENTAL HEALTH

## DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR TEEN TO COME TO YOU

**Talking to you children about their mental health may not be easy, but starting the conversation is important.**

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), depression is globally the third highest disease burden amongst adolescents and suicide the second leading cause of death in 15 to 29-year-olds, while the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) states that 9% of teenage deaths in the country are due to suicide. Clinical psychologist, Nicolize Nepgen says that understanding the signs of depression and talking about mental health are key to preventing suicide.

Communities that have insight to this serious matter can assist with the prevention of suicide. Prevention of teen suicides starts with better understanding of the symptoms of depression. Most people with depression are not suicidal, but most suicidal people are depressed.



Parents may not always know what to look out for or what to be concerned about.

### **Warning signs of teen suicide include:**

- Withdrawing from social contact.
- Talking or writing about suicide.
- Feeling trapped, hopeless, or helpless about a situation.
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns.
- Doing risky or self-destructive things.
- Having mood swings.
- Giving away belongings when there is no other logical explanation for why this is being done.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated when experiencing some of the warning signs listed above.

## In addition, the symptoms of depression, as listed by SADAG, include:

- Loss of interest in things you like to do.
- Sadness that won't go away.
- Irritability or feeling angry a lot.
- Feelings of guilt or hopeless.
- Feeling tense or worrying.
- Crying a lot.
- Spending most of the time alone.
- Eating too much or too little.
- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Having low energy or restless feelings.
- Feeling tired all the time.
- Missing school, daydreaming, or doing badly at school.
- Not being able to make decisions or concentrate.
- Thinking of dying or killing yourself.

---

### TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Here are some expert tips to help you get the conversation going with your teens.

**Talk.** Talking about mental health and suicide are important. Don't wait for your teen to come to you. If your teen is sad, anxious, depressed or appears to be struggling – ask what's wrong and offer your support.

**Pay attention.** If your teen is thinking about suicide, listen to what your child is saying. Never shrug off threats of suicide as a melodrama.

**Monitor social media use.** Talk about and monitor social media usage. If your teen is hurt or upset about social media posts, encourage him or her to talk to you or a trusted family member or friend.

**Provide support.** Talk to your teen about treatment plans and monitor medication use. Don't try to argue them out of suicide and avoid guilt-inducing statements like 'suicide will hurt your family'. Rather let them know that you care and want to understand that they are not alone, and that problems and suicidal feelings are temporary – that depression can be treated, and problems can be solved."

**Listen.** Parents, teachers and friends concerned about a teenager at risk of suicide should be willing to listen without judgement, provide reassurance that they care and to ask questions about suicidal thoughts. Rather let them know that you care and want to understand that they are not alone, and that problems and suicidal feelings are temporary – that depression can be treated, and problems can be solved. >>



## RISK FACTORS FOR TEEN SUICIDE

Many teens who attempt or die by suicide have a mental health condition.

### A teen might also feel suicidal due to certain life circumstances such as:

- Having a psychiatric disorder, for example, depression, an anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder or oppositional disorder.
- Family history of mood disorder, suicide or suicidal behaviour.
- Access to means, such as firearms or medications.
- Exposure to the suicide of family member or friend.
- Loss of or conflict with close friends or family members.
- Physical or medical issues, such as changes related to puberty or chronic illness.
- Being in any sexual minority youth – LGBT.
- Children who have attempted suicide in the past are also at greater risk.
- A substance use disorder.

Understanding these risk factors are important, says Nicolize. She adds that everyone has a role to play in creating awareness.

The process of building community suicide prevention efforts begins by initiating conversation and creating a team of individuals who will maintain the role of facilitating suicide prevention efforts. Involving the community by engaging stakeholders (i.e., employers, local organisations, government, businesses, mental health groups), hosting community meetings, formulation community goals, and working with the media can all benefit community level suicide prevention efforts.



*As a result, they have trouble coping with the stress of being a teen, such as dealing with rejection, failure, break-ups, school difficulties and family turmoil. They might also be unable to see that they can turn their lives around – and that suicide is a permanent response, not a solution, to a temporary problem.*

Nicolize Nepgen

## GETTING HELP

People wanting to help could suggest that teens talk to an external party, like a teacher, doctor, psychologist, or social worker, and offer to go with them for support. On any concerns of a suicide risk, the person should be taken immediately to a clinic or emergency department. When the condition has been identified, continue support, and take an active role, for example by ensuring that they take their prescribed medication or attend scheduled intervention sessions. ■



**You can visit your nearest healthcare facility for support.**

**Melomed Claremont:**  
021 683 0540

**Melomed 24-hour Trauma Units:**

**Melomed Gatesville Trauma Unit:**  
021 637 8100

**Melomed Bellville Trauma Unit:**  
021 948 6535

**Melomed Mitchells Plain Trauma Unit:**  
021 392 3126

**Melomed Richards Bay Trauma Unit:**  
035 791 5301

**Melomed Tokai Trauma Unit:**  
021 764 7023

Remember that help is available, and you are not alone.



Source: Press release from Western Cape Government Health

# Let's talk



If you are a teenager or young person or know someone who is feeling overwhelmed or anxious, you are not alone.

**HELP IS AVAILABLE.**

**Speak to a healthcare worker at your local clinic or use the following numbers for support.**

**Lifeline: 0861 322 322**

**Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 567**

**SA Depression and Anxiety Group: 011 234 4837**

**Childline: 116**

**Cipla Helpline: 0800 456 789**

**Cipla WhatsApp Chat Line: 076 882 2775**



**Western Cape  
Government**

**FOR YOU**

Health



# A day that leads to your BEST NIGHT'S SLEEP



## Morning



Eat breakfast by a window or outdoors – the sun helps reset your body's circadian clock.



Make your bed. People who do are more likely to sleep better at night.



Wake at the same time every morning, including weekends and holidays.

## Afternoon



Exercise at lunch. Early workouts may sacrifice sleep, and those within 3 hours of bed may keep you awake.



Cut caffeine by 16:00 or noon if sensitive. Its effects can linger for 4 hours or more.



If you need a nap, take it before 15:00, and keep it to 30 minutes or less.

## Evening



Have a light before-bed snack – yogurt or fruit – if hunger often wakes you in the night.



Turn off tech 30 minutes before bed. Blue light and constant stimulation make it tough to wind down.



Stick to the same bedtime – or vary it by no more than an hour.

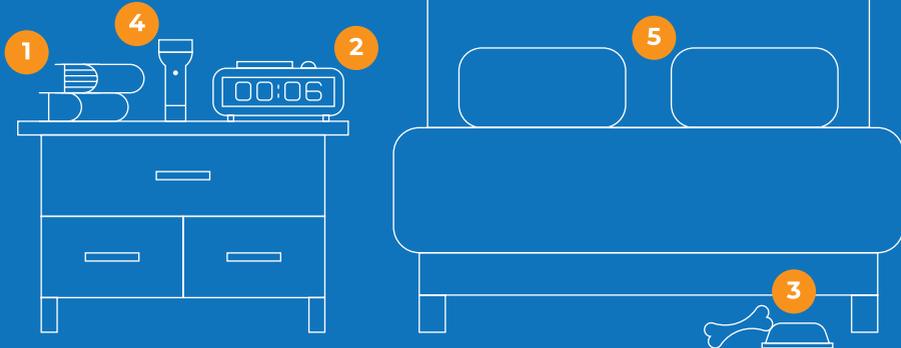


Keep showers or baths warm (not hot). Also turn down the thermostat a few degrees to mimic your nighttime drop in body temperature.



Use lamps and dimmers. Bright overhead lights trick your brain into thinking it's still daytime.

# Your bedroom for **BETTER SLEEP**



1

**Remove the TV, computer and other mind stimulating, blue-light emitting tech from the bedroom – and wind down with an old-fashioned paper book before sleep instead.**

2

**Set your alarm clock display to “dim” or turn the clock away from your face.** If your phone is your alarm clock, flip it facedown. Artificial light can disrupt your body’s sleep clock.

3

**Let pets sleep in a different room,** or at least keep them out of yours. Their movements can disrupt sleep and their dander can trigger allergies.

4

**Keep a flashlight beside your bed so you won’t need to turn on brighter lights during nighttime bathroom breaks.**

5

**Replace the mattress every 10 years, pillows every 2 years.** This helps with comfort and allergen buildup.

6

**Use room darkening blinds or window coverings to block out external light. ■**

# Facts and truths about vaping

## 1. Vaping is less harmful than smoking, but it's still not safe.

**Both regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes expose people to the addictive drug, nicotine. Tobacco in regular cigarettes contains nicotine, which you have to burn and then inhale to experience its stimulating and relaxing effects. E-cigarettes heat nicotine (extracted from tobacco), flavourings and other chemicals to create an aerosol that you inhale.** Regular tobacco cigarettes contain 7,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic. Because e-cigarettes are smokeless and they often taste nice due to flavourings, many people believe that it's a healthier alternative to cigarettes, as research has shown that tobacco smoke has a strong link to the development of cancer.

Although nicotine itself is not a carcinogen, it may function as a 'tumour promoter' and seems to play a role in the development of serious diseases, like cancer. E-cigarettes may also contain chemicals that can cause cancer, according to a study in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology*.

During the study researchers analysed the vapour of two different e-cigarettes. They found that e-cigarettes release 31 harmful chemicals, including two that can be linked to cancer. The number of chemicals that is released varies, based on the temperature at which the liquids are vaporised. The higher the temperature, the more chemicals are emitted.

Research from The Johns Hopkins University on vape ingredients published in October 2021 reveals thousands of chemical ingredients in vape products, most of which are not yet identified. Among those the team could identify were several potentially harmful substances, including caffeine, three chemicals never previously found in e-cigarettes, a pesticide and two flavourings linked with possible toxic effects and respiratory irritation.

Although vaping exposes you to fewer toxic chemicals than smoking traditional cigarettes, it doesn't mean that they're healthy. Regular cigarettes are super unhealthy. E-cigarettes are just unhealthy. >>



## 2. Research suggests vaping is bad for your heart and lungs.

Nicotine is the primary agent in regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes, and it is highly addictive and toxic. It causes you to crave a smoke and suffer withdrawal symptoms if you ignore the craving.

It's common knowledge that smoking can increase your risk for cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks and strokes. Up until recently, experts weren't sure if or how vaping would affect your heart. However, a recent study in the journal JAMA Cardiology has found that people who vape may not be better off than their tobacco-smoking counterparts.

During the study, researchers compared people who had been regularly vaping for a year to healthy non-smokers and found that the vapers had increased levels of adrenaline in the heart and increased oxidative stress, which are the same biological markers that increase the risk of heart disease in tobacco users.

## 3. Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional ones.

Both e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes contain nicotine, which research suggests may be as addictive as heroin and cocaine. Many e-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a combustible tobacco product: Users can buy extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine, or increase the e-cigarette's voltage to get a greater hit of the substance.

## 4. Electronic cigarettes aren't the best smoking cessation tool.

The original purpose of the first commercially successful e-cigarette, invented in 2003, was to help people quit smoking. Although they've been promoted as an aid to help you quit smoking, e-cigarettes have not received Food



and Drug Administration approval as smoking cessation devices.

Research has so far been unable to find a strong link between vaping and helping people to quit smoking. Given the scarcity and low quality of scientific evidence, it cannot be determined whether e-cigarettes may help most smokers quit or prevent them from doing so, according to CANSA.

A recent study found that most people who intended to use e-cigarettes to kick the nicotine habit ended up continuing to use traditional and e-cigarettes.

### 5. A new generation is getting hooked on nicotine.

Among youth, e-cigarettes, especially the disposable kind, are more popular than any traditional tobacco product. According to the 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey, more than 2 million U.S. middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in 2021, with more than 8 in 10 of those youth using flavoured e-cigarettes.

According to Blaha, there are three reasons e-cigarettes may be particularly enticing to young people. First, many teens believe vaping is less harmful than smoking. Second, e-cigarettes have a lower per-use cost than traditional cigarettes. Finally, youths and adults find the lack of smoke appealing. With no smell, e-cigarettes reduce some of the stigma of smoking.

What is most concerning about the rise of vaping is that people who would've never smoked otherwise, especially youth, are taking up the habit. It's one thing if you convert from cigarette smoking to vaping. It's quite another thing to start up nicotine use with vaping. And, getting hooked on nicotine often leads to using traditional tobacco products down the road. Children and teenagers who are exposed to nicotine may also suffer long-term brain development consequences that can potentially lead to learning and anxiety disorders.

### Vaping and the COVID-19 pandemic

Vaping, smoking and other lung irritants can compound the respiratory problems associated with COVID-19.

### What to consider if you vape

If you choose to vape, make sure you choose a product that fully discloses the chemicals used, so that you can educate yourself on their potential harmful effects.

However, the best thing you can do for your health is to quit smoking altogether.

### Want to quit smoking?

There's a strong link between smoking and cardiovascular disease, and between smoking and cancer. But the sooner you quit, the quicker your body can rebound and repair itself. Talk to your doctor about which smoking cessation program or tools would be best for you. ■

#### Source:

- [www.casaa.org/historical-timeline-of-electronic-cigarettes](http://www.casaa.org/historical-timeline-of-electronic-cigarettes)
- [www.jamanetwork.com/journals](http://www.jamanetwork.com/journals)
- [www.bloomberg.com/news](http://www.bloomberg.com/news)
- [www.health.harvard.edu/blog](http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog)
- [www.theverge.com/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigs-chemicals-cancer-fda](http://www.theverge.com/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigs-chemicals-cancer-fda)
- [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc)
- [www.hopkinsmedicine.org/5-truths-you-need-to-know-about-vaping](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/5-truths-you-need-to-know-about-vaping)



## COVID-19 Vaccination and Pregnancy

By Dr Thalia Isaacs

As a global nation we have experienced our greatest challenge in the last 27 months. COVID-19 has affected the lives of each one of us whether it has been through lock down regulations, physical or mental illness, death or loss. While there is some hope that the pandemic may be becoming less deadly and more endemic it is still of utmost importance that we utilize every tool made available to us in our fight in the war against the COVID-19 virus.

Pregnancy is a unique physiological state. It is both a beautiful and petrifying time in a woman's life. While she hopes to knit together a new being within herself, she potentially offers her life in the process. While it is considered that pregnancy itself is not a risk factor for contracting the COVID-19 virus, it has been shown both internationally and locally that women who are pregnant and have COVID-19 infection are at a higher risk of increased disease severity, a need for

oxygen supplementation, hospitalization, ventilation and death. Their fetuses are at an increased risk of preterm delivery and all the risks and complications associated thereof and a minor increase of being stillborn.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective for pregnant women. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has an efficacy of 95% (95% CI 90.0–97.9%) and the Janssen vaccine has an efficacy of 66.1% (95% CI 55.0–74.8%)

against symptomatic COVID-19. All women in the reproductive age group should be offered a vaccine against the COVID-19 virus as well as a booster shot whether they are pregnant or are planning a pregnancy. Global studies have shown a reduction in the severity of disease, reduction in the risk of iatrogenic preterm deliveries, a reduction in stillbirths associated with COVID-19 and passive passage of antibodies against COVID-19 to the

newborn after vaccination against the COVID-19 virus.

Women who are pregnant may opt to have a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy after 14 weeks, in line with South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (SASOG) recommendations. Peak levels of immunity are achieved 14 days after a booster shot. Therefore, it is best if you can have both jabs two weeks before you reach your third trimester.

It is also safe to have a vaccine in the postpartum period after a normal vertex delivery also known as a vaginal delivery or after an uncomplicated caesarean section. It is also safe to have a vaccine while breast feeding.

Side effects experienced when being vaccinated

are usually mild and short lived and include pain, swelling and redness at the injection site, headache, fever and body aches. More severe side effects such as thrombosis are extremely rare and there has been no evidence to date showing that having the vaccine has any negative effects on the unborn fetus.

There is also no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines affect fertility. Please do consider having a vaccine. While it remains your choice it may be what saves you or a loved one's life. Please ask your health care provider, your obstetrician or gynaecologist for more information if you are uncertain on whether having a vaccine is safe for you. You can also find more information regarding the COVID-19 virus from reputable organisations such as

the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Most importantly stay well and stay safe. ■



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **DR. THALIA ISAACS**

*MBChb Cape Town, FCOG (SA), MMEB (O&G) (CapeTown),  
Dip Obs (SA)*

Dr. Isaacs is a Gynaecologist and Obstetrician currently practicing at Melomed Bellville.

**Tel: 021 110 5070**

**Email: [reception@drthaliaisaacs.com](mailto:reception@drthaliaisaacs.com)**



## SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES

FISHING GETAWAYS IN THE WESTERN CAPE



WILDERNESS

### OAKHURST FARM COTTAGES

*From R1850 per night for 5 people*

This working farm outside Hoekwil, Wilderness, offers tastefully decorated cottages in beautiful surroundings. Guests can cycle, swim, ride horses and fish for bass right on the property, so you'll be hard-pressed to find a place that will keep the entire family as happy or as busy!

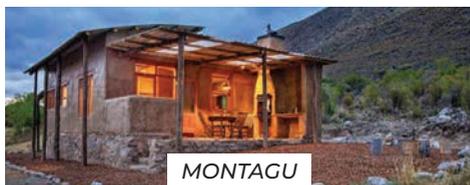


FRANSCHHOEK WINELANDS

### LA FERME

*From R1575 per night for 2 people*

Come and explore the beautiful Franschhoek Winelands when you stay in one of La Ferme's self-catering wooden cabins. There are four well-stocked dams with rainbow trout, bass and carp on the premises and guests can hike or bike in the neighbouring nature reserve.



MONTAGU

### KINGFISHER COTTAGES

*From R1 300 per night for 2 people*

This farm is the ideal place to start your angling journey as fishing lessons and fresh trout products are available. If you're already an adept fisherman, try your hand at catching some trout (at an extra cost per kilogram) in the dams on the farm. Accommodation is available in beautiful eco units, one of which is pet-friendly!



MALGAS

### TIDES RIVER LODGE

*From R1 950 per night for 3 people*

Tides River Lodge is in a sheltered cove on the banks of the Breede River and each of the four self-catering units front an expansive lawn where the kids can run and romp while you cast your line for cod and grunter. The river is ideal for canoeing and the De Hoop Nature Reserve is a short drive away for a day trip.

South Africa's lakes, dams, rivers and mountain streams are a treat for any nature lover. For a freshwater fisherman though, these bodies of water are the ultimate challenge: striking scenery in which to clinch that big catch or a place to trade the city bustle for carp and bass. LekkeSlaap has rounded up a handful of stays where you can fish on the premises so both you and your loved ones can capitalize on your next fishing getaway.



MONTAGU

### **GLEN EDEN FARM GUEST COTTAGES**

*From R900 per night for 2 people*

Weirdly wonderful accommodation awaits on this small-holding between Montagu and Barrydale. Stay in luxury cottages or unique glamping units on the property, chill in the small swimming pool, rest in the wood-fired hot tub or have the kids pet the various friendly farm animals. If you're heading to the dam, black bass and tilapia might be your catch of the day.



RAWSONVILLE

### **PLATBOS LOG CABINS**

*From R1 650 per night for 2 people*

A picturesque valley at the foot of the Slanghoek Mountains, with stilted wooden cabins scattered around a lake – doesn't that sound like a dream? These cabins sleep six guests each and your group can hike to the waterfall along fynbos-rich paths, simply relax on the deck or fly-fish on the premises. Note that a high clearance vehicle is needed to reach the cabins.



WOLSELEY

### **HOOGWATER FARMLIFE AND ACCOMMODATION**

*From R1350 per night for 2 people*

These self-catering cottages in beautiful Wolseley welcome you and your family for a country-living experience. Sit on the stoep, chill in the wood-fired hot tub, pick your own fruit during harvest time, or bring your fishing rod and cast a line for bass and carp!



VERMAAKLIKHEID

### **THORN & FEATHER**

*From R1 999 per night for 6 adults and 3 children*

Thorn & Feather is right on the Duiwenhoks River on the edge of an Afromontane forest. It offers pet-friendly accommodation and a private jetty by which fishermen can get easy access to the cod, garrick, white steenbras and spotted grunter in the river. Sit around the firepit, in the splash pool or hire water sporting equipment so the entire family can enjoy the river fun! ■



# Crispy Fish and Chunky Chips

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes  
**Cook Time:** 45 minutes  
**Servings:** 4 people

Old-school crispy battered fish, and chunky chips is an irresistible classic. Serving it with mushy peas and a garlic-mayo takes it over the top!

## Ingredients

- 900g potatoes
- Sunflower or canola oil, for deep-frying
- 4 to 5 firm, white fish (hake, cod) fillets, skin off
- 1 cup plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 4 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup water or soda water

## Mushy Peas

### Ingredients

- A few sprigs of fresh mint
- 1 knob of unsalted butter
- 4 handfuls of podded peas
- ½ a lemon

### Instructions

Pick and finely chop the mint leaves. Place the butter in a pan over a medium-low heat, add the peas and mint, pop the lid on and simmer gently for 10 minutes.

Add a squeeze of lemon juice and season to taste with sea salt and black pepper – you can either mush the peas up in a food processor, or mash them by hand. Keep them warm until needed.



## Garlic mayo dips

### Ingredients

- ½ cup tangy mayonnaise
- ⅓ cup cream
- 2 tbsp garlic-infused oil
- A handful of finely chopped parsley
- Juice of a ½ a lemon

### Instructions

Mix together the mayo, cream, garlic-infused oil, cream, parsley and lemon juice.

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Peel and slice the potatoes into chips.
3. Pour the sunflower oil into a deep fat fryer or a large sturdy pan and heat it to 190°C.
4. Mix ½ a teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of pepper together, then use it to season the fish fillets on both sides – this will help to remove any excess water, making the fish really meaty.
5. Mix the flour, spices, and baking powder together and add the liquid slowly to ensure the batter is not too runny. Reduce the liquid quantity if needed.
6. Dust each fish fillet in a little of the extra flour, then dip into the batter and allow any excess to drip off. Holding one end, gently lower the fish into the oil one by one, working carefully so you don't get splashed – it will depend on the size of your fryer or pan how many fish you can cook at once.
7. Cook for 4 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through and the batter is golden and crisp, then remove to kitchen paper to drain.
8. Meanwhile, parboil the chips in boiling salted water for 4 to 5 minutes, or until softened but still retaining their shape, then drain and steam dry.
9. When the chips are nice and dry, fry in the oil that the fish were cooked in at 180°C until golden and crisp.
10. While the chips are frying, transfer the fish from the kitchen paper to a baking tray. Place in the oven for a few minutes to finish cooking – this way they will stay crisp while you finish off the chips.
11. When the chips are done, drain them on kitchen paper, season with salt, and serve with the fish, garlic-mayo dip, mushy peas and some lemon wedges. ■

# HOUSECALL



MEET ONE OF OUR DEDICATED SPECIALISTS

## DR THALIA ISAACS

SHE IS ONE OF OUR GYNAECOLOGIST & OBSTETRICIAN AT MELOMED BELLVILLE HOSPITAL SUITE 22 | TEL: 021 110 5070



### WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO EAT, AND WHY?

'I love any place with a beautiful view be it mountains, oceans, rivers or streams. Having said that – my all time favourite food is a bredie so in actual fact my favourite place to eat is my mom's kitchen.



### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR PROFESSION?

I think it chose me. I fell in love with obstetrics when I was in my fourth year as an undergraduate student. Delivering babies as a student made me feel like I was actually studying medicine for the first time, amongst all the constant studying and writing of exams. I enjoy watching a potential life developing. I sort of feel like a Godmother of all the babies I have the pleasure of caring for in utero. As for gynaecology, it is the fact that we impact on the quality of a woman's life that brings me the most joy.

**WHAT'S YOUR WORST HABIT?** Social media/ phone addiction.

**WHAT TV SHOW CHARACTER FROM WHICH TV SHOW DO YOU LIKE THE MOST?** Alicia Florrick from the Goodwife.



**WHICH CHILDHOOD MOVIE DO YOU STILL LOVE TODAY, AND WHY?** Alice in Wonderland. I identified with Alice growing up as I too loved to daydream and spent many hours reading and going on adventures within my imagination.

**WHAT'S YOUR SECRET PHOBIA?** All my phobias are well known. I have a fear of heights and I am claustrophobic.

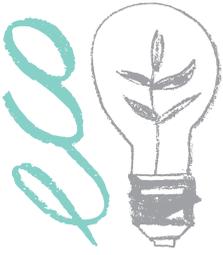
### WHAT IS YOUR BEST CHILDHOOD MEMORY, AND WHY?

Spending afternoons after nursery school with my late grandmother Gladys Klassen.

**WHERE DO YOU MOST WANT TO TRAVEL, BUT HAVE NEVER BEEN?** Fiji Islands or Kenya.

**WHAT CELEBRITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE FOR A DAY, AND WHY?** I would like to be Jeff Bezos for a day. I would donate all his money towards settling low income countries' debts, providing water and sanitation and health care to all. ■

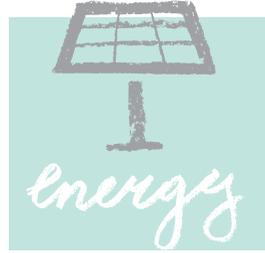




WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT

## MELOMED TOKAI HAS GONE GREEN!

**Melomed Tokai is becoming a more eco-friendly hospital and with our newly installed solar installation, we are now able to generate our own energy.**



The research into solar panels started when reviewing the statistics regarding our energy consumption and how we can look at ongoing solutions to reduce the carbon footprint at our hospitals.

One of the major expenses of any business is the ever-increasing electricity bill. The per-unit rate of electricity used in a commercial building is much higher than in residential complexes. By using solar power, we will reduce the business' dependency on utility-provided electricity and relieve some pressure on the already strained grid. With this clean energy solution, we could be saving approximately 15% of our energy requirements. Solar energy helps reduce greenhouse gas emission in the country and part of Melomed's social responsibility is to contribute towards reducing our carbon footprint and play a role in saving our environment.

We've put a significant amount of thought, time, and effort into making some very important changes at our facilities which will reduce the amount of waste and pollution to our environment, while still maintaining our very high standards of quality patient care. We're excited about continuing on our "green" journey, as we consider further environmentally friendly initiatives that we can take.



**Melomed would love to hear your ideas, opinions, or suggestions regarding our ongoing green efforts!**

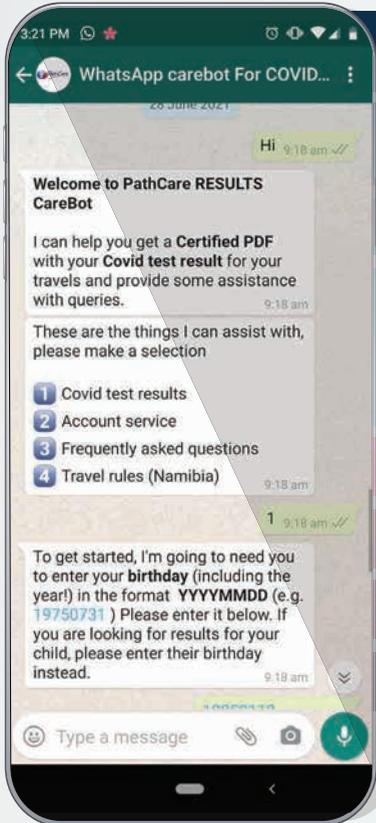
# Introducing PathCare's WhatsApp CAREBOT

where you can retrieve a copy of your  
COVID-19 results



"Pathology that Adds Value"

## HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:



Save 021 596 2130 as a contact on your phone  
– call it PathCare Bot

Navigate to your WhatsApp App  
Find your PathCare Bot contact

Send us a message: Hi

You will be presented with different services

1. COVID test results
2. Accounts
3. FAQ
4. Travel rules (Namibia)

Select the number of the service you want to access

Provide your Date of Birth

Wait for validation

Retrieve your PDF results

Please note that the Bot will only interact with you on the cell/mobile number you provided on your COVID request form. No one can get your results on your behalf from a different cell/mobile number.