

# **SPINAL CONSERVATIVE CARE PROGRAMME**

DISCOVERY HEALTH MEDICAL SCHEME  
2022





## Introducing the Spinal Conservative Care Programme

Back pain is one of the most common medical conditions experienced by members. Appropriate out-of-hospital conservative management of back pain has proven to deliver good outcomes and could prevent the need for surgery.

This programme will help you manage your condition with the support of a network of healthcare professionals that specialise in the treatment and rehabilitation of back and neck pain.

This document gives you more information about the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, which is available on all Discovery Health Medical Scheme plans except the Essential Smart Plan and the KeyCare plans.

### About some of the terms we use in this document

There may be some terms we refer to in the document that you may not be familiar with. Here are the meanings of these terms.

TERMINOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
Cover	Cover refers to the benefits you have access to and how we pay for these healthcare services such as consultations, medicine and hospitals, on your health plan.
Discovery Health Rate (DHR)	This is a rate we pay for healthcare services from hospitals, pharmacies, healthcare professionals and other providers of relevant health services.
Find a healthcare provider	Find a healthcare provider is a medical and provider search tool which is available on the Discovery app and website <a href="http://www.discovery.co.za">www.discovery.co.za</a> .
HealthID	HealthID is an online digital platform that gives your doctor fast, up-to-date access to your health information. Once you have given consent, your doctor can use HealthID to access your medical history, make referrals to other healthcare professionals and check your relevant test results.

### Access to the programme subject to clinical entry criteria

You may qualify as a possible candidate for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme for conservative back or neck pain management subject to clinical entry criteria and after a recent hospital stay or request for hospital admission, related to a spinal admission. Where the criteria are met you will have the option of visiting one of our conservative care network healthcare professionals for an assessment for enrolment on the programme.

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme is a coordinated out-of-hospital programme for the conservative treatment of spinal pain. The programme offers you cover for and access to:

- A network of physiotherapists and chiropractors who are trained in the management of spinal pain, supported by a network of spinal surgeons, where applicable.
- A focused programme developed by experts in the conservative (non-surgical) management of back pain. The programme is flexible, providing a combination of in-person and virtual care, as deemed necessary by the therapists, and may be overseen by a spinal surgeon in the network.

You will need to consult a chiropractor or physiotherapist in the conservative care network to be assessed for enrolment onto the programme. For your chosen healthcare professional to view your medical records on HealthID you must grant them consent to access your Electronic Health Record. Through the programme, you and your treating healthcare professional can agree on key goals and track your progress.

### Your chiropractor or physiotherapist will work with you to manage your condition

Once enrolled, the Spinal Conservative Care Programme gives you access to a defined basket of care for consultations with a network conservative care healthcare professional over a period of 6 to 12 weeks. These sessions can be conducted face-to-face or

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through the Discovery Connected Care online platform. You can choose to consult either a network physiotherapist or a network chiropractor for your treatment.

Your treating healthcare professional will decide what is best for you and your condition. Once enrolled we cover the consultation fee with your healthcare professional in full and cover will not affect your day-to-day benefits, where applicable. Any additional conservative healthcare services outside of the sessions approved as part of the defined basket of care, will be covered in accordance with the benefits on your chosen health plan.

## How to find a physiotherapist or chiropractor in the network

To find a physiotherapist or chiropractor in the network:

### 1. Log on to the Discovery website:

On the Discovery website [www.discovery.co.za](http://www.discovery.co.za), under Medical Aid > Find a doctor > Find a doctor close to you. Type in the name or category of healthcare professional you would like to find closest to you e.g. physiotherapist and your address and select the search icon. To filter your results for physiotherapists or chiropractors in the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, select Care Programmes under the search filters, and tick the box for Spinal Conservative Care.

### 2. Log on to your Discovery app:

On the Discovery app, navigate to Medical aid > Find a healthcare provider. Type in the name or category of healthcare professional you would like to see e.g. chiropractor. Select Filters > Care Programmes > Spinal Conservative Care and then navigate back to the search page and select 'Apply'.

## Your chosen healthcare professional will assess you for possible enrolment onto the programme

Your healthcare professional needs to assess you for possible enrolment onto the programme through HealthID with your consent. They also have to capture specific clinical information related to your condition during the course of the programme.

## Your cover on the programme

If you are enrolled on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme:

- Any additional conservative healthcare services, outside of the sessions approved as part of the defined basket of care, will be covered in accordance with your chosen health plan benefits.
- If you change conservative care network providers, we continue counting the sessions from where you left off with your first healthcare professional. Your cover does not reset with the new provider.
- If you stop the programme, we do not pay further fees.
- Where clinically appropriate, your conservative care network provider can refer you for further assessment with a network spinal surgeon. If you need to have surgery, the conservative care programme will end.
- Members are eligible for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme only once per year, even if your condition recurs or a new area of concern arises.
- Members who have had spinal surgery in the past 24 months do not qualify for the programme.
- This programme excludes emergencies, oncology, congenital and trauma-related injuries. These are covered according to the benefits on your chosen health plan.

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## Contact us

Tel (members): 0860 99 88 77, Tel (health partners): 0860 44 55 66

Go to [www.discovery.co.za](http://www.discovery.co.za) to Get Help or ask a question on WhatsApp. Save this number 0860 756 756 on your phone and say "Hi" to start chatting with us 24/7.

PO Box 784262, Sandton, 2146. 1 Discovery Place, Sandton, 2196.

## Complaints process

Discovery Health Medical Scheme is committed to providing you with the highest standard of service and your feedback is important to us. The following channels are available for your complaints and we encourage you to follow the process:

### 1 | STEP 1 – TO TAKE YOUR QUERY FURTHER:

If you have already contacted the Discovery Health Medical Scheme and feel that your query has still not been resolved, please complete our online complaints form on [www.discovery.co.za](http://www.discovery.co.za). We would also love to hear from you if we have exceeded your expectations.

### 2 | STEP 2 – TO CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER:

If you are still not satisfied with the resolution of your complaint after following the process in Step 1 you are able to escalate your complaint to the Principal Officer of the Discovery Health Medical Scheme. You may lodge a query or complaint with Discovery Health Medical Scheme by completing the online form on [www.discovery.co.za](http://www.discovery.co.za) or by emailing [principalofficer@discovery.co.za](mailto:principalofficer@discovery.co.za).

### 3 | STEP 3 – TO LODGE A DISPUTE:

If you have received a final decision from Discovery Health Medical Scheme and want to challenge it, you may lodge a formal dispute. You can find more information of the Scheme's dispute process on the website.

### 4 | STEP 4 – TO CONTACT THE COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL SCHEMES:

Discovery Health Medical Scheme is regulated by the Council for Medical Schemes. You may contact the Council at any stage of the complaints process, but we encourage you to first follow the steps above to resolve your complaint before contacting the Council.

Contact details for the Council for Medical Schemes: Council for Medical Schemes Complaints Unit, Block A, Eco Glades 2 Office Park, 420 Witch-Hazel Avenue, Eco Park, Centurion 0157 | [complaints@medicalschemes.co.za](mailto:complaints@medicalschemes.co.za) | 0861 123 267 | [www.medicalschemes.co.za](http://www.medicalschemes.co.za)

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