

**FROM DIABETES DIAGNOSIS  
TO A #DIAMONDWARRIOR  
– HOW A VITALITY HEALTH  
CHECK CHANGED TONY'S LIFE**



## From diabetes diagnosis to a #DiamondWarrior – how a Vitality Health Check changed Tony's life

Tony Calitz struggled with his health for years until a yearly Vitality Health Check alerted him to an underlying chronic condition. He started managing his health more proactively and has risen to the challenge to become a true #DiamondWarrior.

In 2014, Durban-based financial adviser Tony Calitz (66) was on Diamond Vitality status. He cycled a lot and thought he was eating healthily, but he wasn't losing his extra weight and was often plagued with health niggles. Despite all his efforts, he could tell from his yearly Vitality screenings that he wasn't as healthy as he wanted to be.

### Understanding 'out-of-range' results

"Each year was a struggle. I'd been on cholesterol meds for many years and every time I got sick, my blood-sugar levels would go up due to a lack of exercise. December 2014 was lousy as I suffered from a month-long cold, and in the first week of 2015, I went to a pharmacy to do my Vitality Health Check (VHC)."

Tony's VHC revealed that his blood sugar level was a rather high 9.4 mmol/L. Knowing that an in-range blood sugar level is less than 7.8 mmol/L, he suspected there might be a problem, so he called his doctor for a glucose-tolerance test. When the results came back, Tony was officially diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

### Want better health? Change your habits and let the numbers do the talking

The diagnosis came as a shock, but Tony understood that in order to get a handle on his health, his everyday lifestyle habits needed to change. "At the time, my weight was around 135 kg and my resting heart rate was around 60 bpm. I asked my doctor to refer me to a good dietician and I started walking and jogging more – at least 30 to 60 minutes of exercise a day. These decisions proved to be life-changing."

Taking ownership of his health status did wonders, and the proof is in the numbers. "After starting a strict eating plan – with much less salt in my diet – and maintaining a very active exercise regimen, I managed to lose 26 kg by the end of 2015. My weight settled at about 106 kg, but I'm trying to bring that down further, and my resting heart rate decreased to around 43 bpm."

### Those blood tests are excellent indicators

"Vitality has been a great help because those annual blood tests are excellent indicators of your health," Tony says, explaining why regular and accurate screenings are important in case you've developed any health conditions. Tony is living proof that Diamond status isn't beyond the reach of anyone with a chronic condition, crediting Vitality's incentives with helping him get there.

"I've managed to maintain my Diamond Vitality status despite my diagnosis. It's only July now, but thanks to Vitality's extremely motivational rewards, I've already qualified for Diamond in 2020! In fact, until a bad cold halted me in June, I was on a 53-week streak of achieving my 900-point weekly Vitality Active Rewards goals."

### I've halved the amount of meds I used to take

Tony's been a Discovery Health Medical Scheme (DHMS) member for almost 20 years, and he's grateful for the resources at his disposal. "Thankfully, my doctor helped me get onto Discovery Health's Diabetes Care Programme soon after diagnosis, which helped me understand just what diabetes really is, how hard it can be to live with, and how dangerous it can be if left unchecked."

"Diabetes Care pays for all my meds and covers extra GP visits to help me stay on track. My doctor's got me down to just two HbA1c blood tests yearly, with good results, and in this time, I've halved the amount of meds I used to take." Tony also registered for the Discovery Health Cardio Care Programme, which is designed to offer DHMS members optimal cover and best outcomes in dealing with cardiovascular disease.

"Now, I check my bloods every morning with a monitor that links to my phone, and my blood sugar level is usually around 4.5 mmol/L, so I know it's now well-controlled. My fasting cholesterol level has been under 4.0 mmol/L for the past two years and my HDL and LDL cholesterol levels are in a healthy range."

### My measurements are less than they were in the early 1990s!

"My loving wife and babe, Rose, has looked after me so well for the past 44 years, especially since my diabetes diagnosis. I've never had so much energy or felt so good, and my weight and waist measurements are less than they were in the early 1990s! I turn 67 in October and my friends can't believe how good I look nowadays."



"I do a couple of cycle races a year, go for at least three hilly street jogs a week, plus attend a parkrun every Saturday and a myrun every Sunday. Rose is actually the official photographer at both our local parkrun and myrun events, so we know where we will be every weekend. And July marks my 150th parkrun!

"If people say they're sorry I'm diabetic, I tell them that finding out was one of the best things that's happened to me. I'm healthier now than I've been in about 20 years."