

SPINAL CONSERVATIVE CARE PROGRAMME

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.

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme will help you manage your condition with the support of a network of healthcare professionals that specialises in the treatment and rehabilitation of back and neck pain.

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 some of the terms explained.

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.
Fund Rate	This is the rate we pay for healthcare services from hospitals, pharmacies, healthcare professionals and other providers of relevant health services. Where we have specific agreements with healthcare providers, the agreed rate is the Fund Rate for that provider type, for instance hospitals, specialists or GPs.
Find a healthcare provider	Find a healthcare provider is a medical and provider search tool which is available on the Discovery App and website www.engenmed.co.za
Health ID	Health ID is an online digital platform that gives your doctor fast, up-to-date access to your personal health information. Once you have given consent, your doctor can use Health ID 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 a spinal-related hospital admission.

You also have the option of being referred to the Spinal Conservative Care Programme by a network spinal surgeon, who will assess your suitability for the Programme.

Where the clinical entry criteria are met, you will have the option of visiting a healthcare professional in the conservative care network for a full assessment for enrolment on the programme. Please note that enrolment is subject to the assessment and is not guaranteed.

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 and network general practitioners, 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 or general practitioner 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 Health ID, 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 24 weeks. These sessions can be conducted face-to-face or 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 those approved as part of the defined basket of care, will be covered in accordance with your day-to-day benefits.

To find a physiotherapist or chiropractor in the network:

1. Log on to the Engen Medical Benefit Fund website

On the Engen Medical Benefit Fund website www.engenmed.co.za, under My healthcare > Find a healthcare professional > Find a doctor close to you. Type in the name or category of healthcare professional you would like to find 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 the 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 will assess you to see whether you qualify for enrolment onto the Programme through Health ID 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 day-to-day benefits.
- You may not change conservative care network providers once enrolled on the programme.
- If you stop the programme, we do not provide any further benefits you may have qualified for when you were enrolled on the Programme.
- 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, your enrollment on the conservative care programme will end.
- You are eligible for enrollment on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme only once per year, even if your condition recurs or a new area of concern arises.
- If you have had spinal surgery in the past 12 months, you do not qualify for enrollment on the Programme.

- This Programme excludes cover in the case of emergencies, oncology, congenital and moderate to severe trauma-related injuries. These are covered according to the benefits offered by the Fund.

Contact us

You can call us on **0800 001 615** or visit www.engenmed.co.za for more information.

Queries or complaints

You may lodge a query or complaint with the Fund directly on **0800 001 615** or by emailing service@engenmed.co.za. If you are not satisfied with how your query was resolved, please send a complaint in writing to the Principal Officer at the Fund's registered address.

If your complaint or query is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may declare a dispute that will be heard by an independent Disputes Committee of the Fund. You may read more about the disputes process on www.engenmed.co.za

You may, as a last resort, approach the Council for Medical Schemes for assistance: Council for Medical Schemes Complaints Unit, Block A, Eco Glades 2 Office Park, 420 Witch -Hazel Avenue, Eco Park, Centurion, 0157 / **0861 123 267** / complaints@medicalschemes.co.za / www.medicalschemes.co.za