

SPINAL CONSERVATIVE CARE PROGRAMME

DISCOVERY HEALTH MEDICAL SCHEME
2026





Spinal Conservative Care Programme

Back pain is one of the most common medical conditions experienced by Discovery Health Medical Scheme members. Appropriate out-of-hospital conservative management of back pain has proven to deliver optimal 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, Essential Dynamic Smart, Active Smart, 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	Refers to the benefits that you can access on your health plan and how we pay for these healthcare services. The services may include consultations, medicine and hospital visits.
Discovery Health Rate (DHR)	This is the rate that we pay for healthcare services from hospitals, pharmacies, healthcare professionals and other providers of relevant healthcare services.
Find a healthcare provider	'Find a healthcare provider' is a medical provider search tool that is available on the Discovery Health app and website.
HealthID	Discovery HealthID is an online digital platform that gives your doctor fast, upto-date access to your health information. Once you have given consent, your doctor can use HealthID to access your medical history, refer you 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 or network general practitioner, who will assess your suitability for the programme. Where the clinical entry criteria are met, you will have the option of visiting one of our conservative care network healthcare professionals for a full 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 and 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.

Once you are identified as eligible for the programme, 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 here](#). 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. 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 fees 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, under Medical Aid > Find a healthcare provider > 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 Health app:

On the Discovery Health 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.
- You must continue to see the same enrolling conservative care network provider once you have joined the programme.
- 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 12 months do not qualify for the programme.
- This programme excludes emergencies, oncology, congenital and moderate to severe trauma-related injuries. These are covered according to the benefits on your chosen health plan.



How to contact us

	Members can call us on 0860 99 88 77 Health partners can call us on 0860 44 55 66
	Go to www.discovery.co.za to get help from our chatbot, Ask Discovery.
	You can ask us a question by just saving the number 0860 75 67 56 on your phone and typing 'Hi' to start chatting with us 24/7.
	You can send us a letter to PO Box 784262, Sandton, 2146
	You can visit our offices at 1 Discovery Place, Sandton, 2196

We welcome any feedback about our service

We would love to hear if there's anything we can improve on or if we have exceeded your expectations. Your feedback helps us serve you better. To give us feedback, you can complete our short *Complaints and compliments form* on the right side of the [Complaints, compliments or disputes page](#) under **Contact us**.

What to do if you have a complaint

1. To take your query further

If you have already contacted Discovery Health Medical Scheme and feel that your query has not been resolved, you can take the next step. Please complete our short online *Complaints and compliments form*. It's on the right side of the [Complaints, compliments and disputes page](#) under section 1, Contact us.

2. To contact the principal officer

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after following the process in Step 1, you can escalate your complaint to the principal officer of Discovery Health Medical Scheme by choosing one of these options:

- Complete our short online *Contact the principal officer form*. You'll find it on the right side of the [Complaints, compliments and disputes page](#) under section 2, Contact us.
- Send an email to principalofficer@discovery.co.za.

3. To lodge a dispute

If you have received a final decision from the principal officer of Discovery Health Medical Scheme and want to challenge it, you can lodge a formal dispute. You can find more information online about the [Scheme's dispute process](#).

4. To contact the Council for Medical Schemes

Discovery Health Medical Scheme is regulated by the Council for Medical Schemes. You can contact the Council directly at any stage of the complaints process, but we encourage you to follow the steps above before doing so.

The contact details are:

	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
	0861 12 32 67
	www.medicalschemes.co.za

Your privacy matters to us

We take your privacy seriously. We're committed to protecting your personal information and keeping it safe and confidential. You can read our full privacy statement anytime at www.discovery.co.za > **MEDICAL AID** > **About Discovery Health Medical Scheme**.