

Newsletter



August Health Spotlight

August is one of the most active months on the national health calendar, bringing together themes that strongly support corporate priorities around diversity, inclusion, family wellbeing, and long-term health. The calendar highlights National Women's Month, Organ and Tissue Donor Month, Bone Marrow Stem Cell Donation and Leukaemia Awareness (15 August–15 October), and World Breastfeeding Week (1–7 August). Together, these observances emphasise the importance of empowering women, promoting lifesaving donation awareness, supporting new mothers, and encouraging early detection of serious health conditions—all areas where organisations can play a meaningful role in informing, supporting, and uplifting their employees.

Women's Month

Women's Month celebrates the strength and resilience of women while highlighting ongoing gender-based health disparities. Women face higher risks of certain cancers, autoimmune conditions, and mental health challenges, making regular screenings essential. The long-term impact of gender-based violence also remains a critical health concern. Organisations can support women by hosting health webinars or screenings, providing confidential GBV reporting channels, creating mentorship opportunities, and sharing accessible reproductive-health and wellness information.



World Breastfeeding Week

World Breastfeeding Week, observed from 1–7 August, highlights the importance of breastfeeding for both infant immunity and maternal health. Many working mothers face challenges in continuing to breastfeed, making supportive workplace environments essential for their success. Organisations can play a meaningful role by providing private lactation rooms, offering flexible scheduling for breastfeeding mothers, and sharing reliable breastfeeding resources and support networks. These simple measures help create a workplace where mothers feel supported, respected, and empowered to care for their families while thriving professionally.

Organ & Tissue Donor Week

Organ and tissue donation saves thousands of lives each year, yet donor registration remains low due to limited awareness and persistent misconceptions. One donor can save up to eight lives, and registering is simple, voluntary, and deeply impactful. Increasing understanding helps dispel myths and encourages more people to consider becoming donors. Organisations can support this lifesaving cause by hosting donor-registration drives, sharing real stories that highlight the impact of donation, and encouraging employees to discuss their wishes with their families. Through awareness and education, workplaces can help expand the donor pool and give hope to those waiting for transplants.



Bone Marrow Stem Cell Donation & Leukaemia Awareness Campaign

The Bone Marrow Stem Cell Donation and Leukaemia Awareness Campaign, observed from 15 August to 15 October, highlights the lifesaving impact of stem-cell donation for patients with blood cancers. Bone marrow donation can cure conditions such as leukaemia, yet young adults aged 18–35 remain the most urgently needed donors.

Registration is simple, non-invasive, and has the potential to change someone's life forever. Organisations can support this campaign by partnering with donor registries to host onsite cheek-swab drives, sharing clear educational content about the donation process, and encouraging young employees to register as potential donors. Through awareness and participation, workplaces can help expand the donor pool and offer hope to those waiting for a match.

Rheumatic Fever & Rheumatic Heart Disease Awareness

Rheumatic Fever & Rheumatic Heart Disease Awareness Week, observed from 1–7 August, highlights a preventable condition that begins with an untreated strep throat. Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory illness that can develop when strep throat or scarlet fever is not treated early, and over time it can cause permanent damage to the heart valves, known as rheumatic heart disease. Symptoms to look out for include a persistent or severe sore throat, fever, swollen glands, painful or swollen joints, skin rashes, or shortness of breath in more advanced cases. Prevention focuses on early medical care for sore throats that last more than a few days, completing prescribed antibiotics, practicing good hygiene, and monitoring recurring throat infections—especially in children and adolescents, who are most at risk.



World Mosquito Day

World Mosquito Day on 20 August raises awareness about mosquito-borne diseases, which continue to pose a significant public health concern in many regions. Mosquitoes can transmit illnesses such as malaria, dengue, Zika, and chikungunya, making prevention essential for protecting individual and community health. Simple actions can greatly reduce risk: using mosquito repellents, wearing protective clothing—especially at dawn and dusk—and ensuring that stagnant water is removed from areas around homes and workplaces to prevent breeding. Staying informed and taking early precautions helps reduce exposure and supports healthier, safer environments for everyone.

African Traditional Medicine Week

African Traditional Medicine Week, observed from 26–31 August, and African Traditional Medicine Day on 31 August, recognise the deep cultural and historical role that traditional healing plays in South Africa and across the continent. Traditional medicine remains a trusted first point of care for many communities, offering holistic approaches rooted in indigenous knowledge systems. As its use continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to promote safe, informed practices and encourage open dialogue between traditional and modern healthcare providers. Educating the public helps dispel misconceptions, supports safe integration of traditional remedies with clinical treatment, and empowers individuals to make informed health decisions. Observing this week creates space to honour African healing traditions while reinforcing the importance of transparency, safety, and collaboration in healthcare.



August brings together a powerful mix of health awareness themes that highlight prevention, early detection, cultural recognition, and community wellbeing. From celebrating women's health and resilience, to promoting breastfeeding support, lifesaving organ and stem-cell donation, preventing mosquito-borne illnesses, and honouring the role of African traditional medicine, the month encourages *individuals and communities to stay informed, take proactive steps toward better health, and appreciate the diverse practices that shape wellness across South Africa.*