

YOUR CARE POLMED

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Thinking about surgery? Think again!



Back pain can be debilitating, so it's understandable that many individuals living with it look to seemingly quick fixes, such as surgery.

For 1 in 5 South Africans surgery is not the only option.



CONSERVATIVE THERAPY – YOUR FIRST CHOICE

Conservative therapy, such as exercise, is a sustainable way to address and manage back pain. It should be the preferred choice because:

- It's effective – it reduces pain and improves function
- It prepares you to get back to normal or regular functioning
- It reduces work absenteeism



Conservative therapy is even more effective with the input of an interdisciplinary team (physiotherapist, medical doctor, biokineticist, and the patient).

IS SURGERY EVER AN OPTION FOR CHRONIC BACK PAIN?

Albert Van Zijl, Director at Klinikka which licenses the Documentation Based Care (DBC) Treatment Programme in Southern Africa, says that while they advocate the conservative approach, they support surgery when needed. Surgery is the right intervention when indicated and is part of the treatment continuum of spinal conditions.

Sometimes...



IS SURGERY EFFECTIVE FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT?

74%
of the time
back surgery fails.



ONLY 26%
of patients who have had back surgery returned to work after two years.



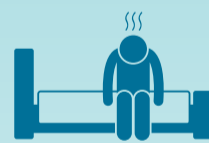
41%
of patients who have had back surgery experience an **increase in the use of painkillers** – which we know can become addictive and have adverse health effects.



30-40%
of patients who have had back surgery experience **post-operative complications.**



Failed back surgery syndrome has been found to increase the risk of **depression and anxiety.**



Chronic back pain can affect your daily life and it can be harmful to your health. However, surgery doesn't have to be your first choice in addressing the issue. Reach out to back pain experts for effective and safer ways to manage the problem.

Back pain that remains unmanaged can be debilitating. Remember to discuss your chronic back pain with your doctor.



Polmed has a Conservative Back and Neck programme which you may access. For more information, contact the **Polmed Client Service Call Centre on 0860 765 633** and follow the prompts to the Disease Risk Management Programme. Alternatively, send an email to polmedcbrnp@medscheme.co.za.

References

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- Marique van der Merwe, QA and Procurement Specialist at Klinikka
- Albert Van Zijl, Director at Klinikka