

0860 1 HEART (0860 1 43278)

Health Line provides guidance on healthy living to South Africans

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa has re-launched its phone service in four languages to provide a lifeline to people who want to live a healthier lifestyle

For many years, the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa has been providing its phone call service to South Africans requiring advice and support on cardiovascular disease, and how they can change their lifestyle to improve their health. Now, thanks to a financial boost from the National Lottery, the Health Line is being re-launched, with consultants trained in motivational interviewing techniques and it will be offered in four languages.

Motivational interviewing techniques have been recognised as an effective tool in health promotion and behavioural change, and all consultants manning the phones have been trained in this discipline. In addition, callers will be given a choice of speaking to a consultant in one of four languages – English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa or amaZulu.

Dr Vash Mungal-Singh, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa, says: “The Health Line has always been a useful service for the public, but the new training for our health promoters means that we will be able to counsel people more effectively, and in more languages, reaching the people who need this service most.”

The service provides access to those with limited resources and in remote areas, and can reduce the burden on health-care services, or give more information to those who have been told by their doctor that they must change their lifestyle in order to protect their health. The number is a Share Call number, where the caller pays just half of a normal call to a landline.

Pat Cleevely from Johannesburg, said: “I found the service provided incredible. The person I spoke to was really helpful and gave me so much useful information, such as how to change my diet, portion control and so on. I have been recommending the Health Line to everyone.”

The health consultants offer support and lifestyle advice for the prevention of cardiovascular disease, including nutrition, physical exercise and tobacco use, as well as guidance on living with cardiovascular disease, or after an event such as a heart attack, heart surgery or stroke. Callers to the Health Line will be taken through a counselling process by the consultant, which will ensure that all the aspects of the client’s needs are considered, and which helps the client to set their own personal goals, based on the client’s own needs and concerns.

Motivational interviewing is a style of counselling that helps consultants have productive and empathetic conversations with individuals about the challenges they face in overcoming certain behaviours. Instead of using pressure or threats, the technique uses collaboration and joint decision-making to help people commit to health behaviour change.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa received funding from the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) to build on the success of the Health Line. Funding was used to buy new equipment for the programme and to train consultants in the knowledge and skills to be able to be a consultant.



Contact details and operating times of the Health Line:

- The Health Line number is: 0860 1 HEART (0860 1 43278)
- The Health Line service is offered between 8am and 4pm on weekdays.
- Should a consultant not be available to take your call in the language of your choice, your call will be returned as soon as possible, at least within 24 hours.

Please note that the consultants are not trained to give medical advice, such as guidance on drug regimens, or specific concerns about symptoms. In this case, speak to your doctor or specialist. If you think you or a person you are with might be having a stroke or heart attack, this is an emergency! Go immediately to the nearest ER or to phone an ambulance at:

- **10177** (from landline) or **112** (from a cell) for Public Sector Emergency Medical Services
- **084 124** (ER24 Medi-Clinic) for Private Emergency Medical Services
- **082 911** (Netcare) for Private Emergency Medical Services

- ENDS -

For more information contact: Victoria Shand on 021 447 6268, or email:
victoria@heartfoundation.co.za

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSF) plays a leading role in the fight against *preventable heart disease and stroke*, with the aim of seeing fewer South Africans suffer premature deaths and disabilities.

The HSF was established in 1980 is a non-governmental non-profit organization and has NPO and section 21 status.

For more advice on healthy living, visit www.heartfoundation.co.za or call the Heart and Stroke Health Line on 0860 1 HEART (0860 143278).