

Bonitas introduces first dedicated toddlers health advice line

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Parenting is a joy but it can also be overwhelming and just a little daunting. There is no degree or diploma, you are simply launched into it and there's a steep learning curve. You instantly have a new life depending on you and, combined with sleep deprivation, the challenges of adjusting to being a parent and wanting to do the best for your child, you need all the help you can get.

Bonitas Medical Fund is doing just that with the launch of the first dedicated toddler's health advice line, called Babyline, to its members. Here help is at hand, from professionals, as you take the necessary baby steps along the path of looking after the health of your toddler, up to the age of three.



Essentially Babyline is a 24-hour children's health advice line manned by paediatric-trained registered nurses. They are on the other side of the phone to assist with any parental concerns, or health-related issues, 24/7, 365 days of the year.

"Parents are often confronted with a host of children's health issues, particularly in the first three years. In an effort to help educate and support Bonitas moms and dads and to ensure their medical aid benefits last longer, we have partnered with Paed IQ's babyline service," explains Bonitas Medical Fund. "The service was developed in conjunction with the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Pretoria and is based on a concept used by the top providers of child health advice in the USA."

"The system of telephone advice guarantees members instant and real-time access to pre-eminent, professional advice and standardised paediatric protocols," explains Dr Iqbal Karbanee of Babyline. "Our aim is to give parents the best possible resources to help them maintain and improve the health of their child. It's about giving anxious parents peace of mind when it comes to an urgent health concern and, hopefully, will also alleviate unnecessary trips to doctors or hospitals."

How does it work?

Bonitas parents, or their caregivers, simply call the Babyline number on 0860 999 121 to reach a paediatric-trained nurse. Through a series of questions asked regarding the health issue, parents will be provided with professional advice on what to do next. Depending on the symptoms, the advice might be to head straight to the ER or to see a doctor or specialist. The nurse will advise which healthcare provider is the most appropriate, given the health issue.

The services offered by the Babyline include:

- Home care advice
- Clinic/primary care/GP referral for the same day
- Clinic/primary care/GP referral for the following day
- After-hours care within the next six hours
- Immediate referral to the ER

The Babyline service is available to members across all the Bonitas plans, for children under three years.

"We do have to stress that although the Babyline is designed to assist parents with health concerns, nurses do not provide diagnosis or prescriptions. They are on call to offer advice on how best to deal with the current health problem or refer you to the nearest healthcare facility," concluded Bonitas Medical Fund.

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