



NATIONAL ESSENTIAL
MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE BULLETIN

FOR THE MEETING HELD ON THE 19 JUNE 2025: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR STAKEHOLDER DISSEMINATION

Accessible on the following platform:

National Health Insurance (NHI) Website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

The following are the latest editions of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML)

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE



STGs and EML 2024 - 8th Edition

ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL



STGs and EML 2024 - 6th Edition

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL



STGs and EML 2023 Edition updated May 2025

TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY



EML March 2025 Edition

NEW!





ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

A list of the Essential Medicines has been compiled in an Excel Spreadsheet that can be viewed online



ACCESS TO THE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The following formats of the STGs and EML are accepted by the National Department of Health:

-  **National Health Insurance (NHI) website (latest version of the STGs and EML):** The STGs and EML can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>. Refer to Annexure A for guidance on how to navigate the website and access the relevant documents.
-  **Knowledge Hub eLibrary** on the link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/e-library>. All the STGs, EMLs and related technical documents from the 2020-2024 review period have been moved to the NHI webpage on the NDoH website. The historic technical documents are in the process of being transferred. In the interim, if there are any historic technical documents you may require, please email the Essential Drugs Programme (EDP) at SAEDP@health.gov.za.
-  **EMGuidance mobile application:** To sign up, use the following link: <http://onelink.to/sy896k>. Please note there may be a delay before the updated documents published on the NHI webpage are uploaded onto the EMGuidance platform. During that process, a temporary link to the latest PDF version of each chapter will be inserted into the affected chapters on the EMGuidance platform. Once the upload is complete, the temporary link will be replaced with the new material and a footer indicating the version number.
-  **For webinar recordings aimed at strengthening implementation of the STGs and EML:** <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>



ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, ESSENTIAL DRUGS PROGRAMME CIRCULARS

Circulars that are developed by the EDP are disseminated to stakeholders and uploaded on the Affordable Medicines webpage on the NHI website. These circulars can be accessed on the following links:

NHI website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/> and <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/> (errata).

The following circulars and errata were disseminated for the period May 2025 – July 2025:

- i Notice 2025/07/29/EDP/01:** Publication of the 2024 editions of the Primary Healthcare (PHC) and Adult Hospital Level (AHL) STGs and EML; and an erratum to the published 2024 individual PHC Chapter 11 and AHL Chapter 1 – 29 July 2025
- i Notice EDP24062025/01:** Recommendations for Emergency Contraception – 30 June 2025
- i Notice 2025/06/18/EDP/02:** Delay in uploading the latest chapters of the Primary Healthcare and Adult Hospital STGs and EML on the EMGuidance platform – 19 June 2025
- i Erratum 2025/06/09/EDP/01:** Erratum to the published Adult Hospital Level (AHL) STGs and EML Chapter 14: Neurological Disorders – 09 June 2025
- i Notice EDP062025/01:** Updates to the Epilepsy STGs and EML – 05 June 2025
- i Notice 05/2025/CMU:** Interruption in the supply of Magnesium Sulfate; 50%; Injection; 2ml from Adcock Ingram Critical Care (PTY) LTD – 28 May 2025



Please email SAEDP (SAEDP@health.gov.za) if you would like to be added to the mailing list for EDP updates (circulars, chapter updates etc.)

NEWLY APPOINTED NEMLC & ERC

- i** The incoming National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC) and Expert Review Committee (ERC) have been appointed by the Minister of Health for a four-year Term of Office ending 12 May 2029.
- i** The ERC has been combined across all levels of care *i.e. Primary healthcare, Adult Hospital, Paediatric Hospital and Tertiary/ Quaternary*, to allow holistic review across all levels of care and the age continuum.
- i** The Committees are comprised of experts from various backgrounds in health, including bioethics, clinical practice guideline development, clinical pharmacy, clinical research, epidemiology, evidence-based medicine/health technology assessments, health economics/pharmacoeconomics, medicine safety, pharmacology, Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committees (PTCs), public sector clinical practice, rational medicines use and public health and/or policy representing the different levels of care.
- i** The induction process for both Committees is underway and the first introductory meeting was held on 19th June 2025 (joint NEMLC and ERC meeting)

List of topics for prioritisation is being assessed for the 2025-2029 STG/EML review cycle and will be communicated in the next bulletin.

The Terms of Reference of both Committees will be published once ratified.



EDP WHATSAPP COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

For the latest updates to the EDP, join our WhatsApp channel below:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/GEN6bH1rKYVKSJ1b34Ne9>

OR

Scan the QR code





PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AND ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The following items were presented to NEMLC for noting:

- **Erratum to Adult Hospital Level Chapter 14: Epilepsy** – following the publication of the AH Chapter 14: Neurological Disorders in line with **Notice: EDP062025/01** disseminated on 6 June 2025, page 14.24 of the Neurological Disorders Chapter included Figure 4. Risk of congenital structural malformations and neurodevelopment harms associated with various antiseizures medicines. The level of risk of antiseizure medicines was incorrectly reversed on this figure. The figure has been corrected and updated with reference to **Erratum 2025/06/09/EDP/01**. The updated chapter and erratum can be accessed on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED SINCE LAST NEMLC BULLETIN

➤ **PHC Level**

- Chapter 10: HIV and AIDS with supporting NEMLC Report
- Chapter 15: Central Nervous System Conditions with supporting NEMLC Report

Implementation Slide Decks:

- Chapter 15: Central Nervous System Conditions

➤ **AH Level**

- Chapter 1: Alimentary Tract with supporting NEMLC Report
- Chapter 6: Obstetrics with supporting NEMLC Report
- Chapter 14: Neurological Disorders with supporting NEMLC Report

Medicine Reviews:

- Thiamine in the prevention and treatment of Wernicke's encephalopathy and chronic alcohol misuse
- Ketamine for the management of refractory status epilepticus
- Use of antivirals in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy in HIV negative women with chronic active Hepatitis B infection - HBeAG positive to prevent vertical transmission of Hepatitis B
- Addendum to the review: Use of antivirals in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy in HIV negative women with chronic active Hepatitis B

➤ **Technical Documents**

- Epilepsy Subcommittee Report Version 0.1

NEW



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Primary Healthcare (8th Edition, 2024) STGs and EML is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Primary Healthcare tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Primary-Healthcare-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-8th-Edition-2024.pdf>



ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Adult Hospital Level (6th Edition, 2024) STGs and EML, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Adults tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Hospital-Level-Adults-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-6th-Edition-2024.pdf>

NEW**NEW! CONSOLIDATED ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST FOR ALL LEVELS OF CARE –
AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON SPREADSHEET**

The EML satisfies the priority needs of the South African population, provided for by the National Drug Policy of 1996 and is based on the WHO EML concept of evidence-based medicine principles of comparative efficacy, safety, and affordability. Developed and maintained by the ministerially appointed NEMLC, ERC of the NEMLC and the EDP (Affordable Medicines Directorate, National Department of Health), essential medicines are intended to be available within the context of functioning health systems at all times in adequate quantities, in the appropriate dosage forms, with assured quality and adequate information, and at a price the individual and the community can afford.

The EML from the latest versions of the STGs and EML has been extracted into an Excel® spreadsheet. The extracted EML is not intended to replace the STGs and EML but should only serve as a guide to which medicines are approved for use in the South African public health sector. For any guidance on how these medicines should be used, the relevant STGs and EML should be consulted.

The consolidated EML Excel® spreadsheet encompasses the following features: filters by publication, chapter and chapter subsections. Other columns include ICD10 codes, the International Nonproprietary Name, the dose and dosing interval, route of administration, and prescriber. Please read the **'READ FIRST'** tab for further information and disclaimers. This spreadsheet is available for download from the EDP webpage on the National Health Insurance website: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

**THERAPEUTIC INTERCHANGE DATABASE**

The Therapeutic Interchange (TI) database based on the 2019/2020 editions of the PHC and AH STGs and EML has been removed from the current STGs and EML repositories as it is being updated to align with the medicine recommendations made during the 2020-2024 NEMLC review cycle and will be uploaded once updated version is available. For any interim queries on the TI database, kindly contact the EDP on the following email address: SAEDP@health.gov.za.

The TI Policy may still be accessed at the following link: https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Therapeutic-Interchange-Policy_July2021_final.pdf



PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The completed Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML, 2023 edition, updated May 2025, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Paediatrics tab or on the following link: health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2023-Edition-Updated-May-2025.pdf

- Errata to the Paediatric STGs and EML 2023 edition have been published and can be accessed on: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>
 - March 2025
 - October 2024
 - July 2024
 - January 2024
 - December 2023
- Presentations from the Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML 2023 edition webinar launch (held in September 2023) can be found on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab at the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars.>



TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY HOSPITAL LEVEL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level EML, updated March 2025 is available for download on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Tertiary-and-Quaternary-EM-recommendations-March-2025.pdf>

Final reviews and supporting technical documents are published on the NHI website on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>



WEBINAR SERIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STGS AND EML

- Take note of the advertisements shared *via* the Knowledge Hub mailing list, EDP stakeholder mailing list and through the NDoH Facebook page, for the series of webinars to be held showcasing the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) process applied to the review of the STGs and EML and the updated chapters, medicine reviews and costings that have been published as part of the 2020-2024 review cycle of the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML.
- Webinars presentations and recordings for the most recent series are available on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab, on the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>

| Date | Webinar Title | Link |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 25 June 2024 | Webinar 1: Health Technology Assessment | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/national-department-health-standard-treatment-guidelines-essential-medicines-list-session-1 |
| 16 July 2024 | Webinar 2: Mental Health Conditions – updates to the STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/mental-health-updates-ndoh-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicine-list |
| 30 July 2024 | Webinar 3: Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Family Planning STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/obstetrics-and-gynaecology-and-family-planning-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential |
| 13 August 2024 | Webinar 4: Adult Critical Care – introduction to new STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/adult-critical-care-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list |
| 27 August 2024 | Webinar 5: Infections STGs and EML, and Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Report | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/infections-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-and-antimicrobial |
| 17 September 2024 | Webinar 6: Emergencies and Injuries and Poisonings – Updates to the STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/emergencies-injuries-and-poisonings-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines |
| 29 October 2024 | Webinar 7: HIV and AIDS – Updates to the STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/hiv-and-aids-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list |
| 26 November 2024 | Webinar 8: Blood and Blood Forming Organs, Haemophilia – Updates to STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/blood-and-blood-forming-organs-and-haemophilia-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential |
| 11 February 2025 | Webinar 9: Cardiovascular Conditions – Updates to the STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/cardiovascular-conditions-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list |
| 08 April 2025 | Webinar 10: Rational Medicine Use – Updates to the STGs and EML | https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/rational-medicine-use-rmu |



Additional webinars to follow during 2025
Watch this space

Annexure A: Guide on how to access the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List and related technical documents on the NHI website (<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>)

NATIONAL HELPLINE: 0800 012 322 | WHATSAPP NUMBER: 0600 123 456 | info@health.gov.za

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Essential Drugs Programme

The unit oversees development and implementation of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STG's) and Essential Medicines List (EML) of South Africa through the ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC).

The EML refers to the list of medicines deemed to satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.

The STG's provides guidance to health care professionals on the use of medicines which appear on the EML. It consists of a collection of chapters containing disorder groups, background information on the disorder, treatment regimens, as well as other relevant information.

Click here for all information relating to

- PHC STGs & EML
- AHL STGs & EML
- Paediatric Hospital level STGs & EML
- Tertiary & Quaternary level EML

Click here for

- Circulars
- NEMLC bulletins
- Webinars, Presentations & Campaigns

Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML)

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

Communication

Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML)

South Africa has committed to "achieve Universal Health Coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all", one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations. Therefore, an Essential Medicines List (EML) with supporting Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) has been developed, for different levels of care.

The respective STGs and EML for primary healthcare and hospital levels (adults and paediatrics), and the EML for tertiary level of care are described below. The STGs and EML satisfies the priority needs of the South African population, provided for by the National Drug Policy of 1996 and is based on the WHO EML concept of evidence-medicine principles of comparative efficacy, safety, and affordability. Developed and maintained by the ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC), Technical Expert Review Sub-Committees of NEMLC and the Essential Drugs Programme from the Affordable Medicines Directorate of the National Department of Health (NDoH).

The rationale for inclusion or exclusion of a medicine to the EML is described in NEMLC evidence reports, medicine reviews and costing analyses.

The therapeutic interchange database lists therapeutic alternatives for medicines listed on the respective EML.

Primary Healthcare

Hospital Level - Paediatrics

Hospital Level - Adults

Hospital Level - Tertiary And Quaternary

Governance & Policies

Click on the relevant tab to access updates to the STGs & EML for each level of care