

## YOUR MONEY SORTED



# HOW TO CUT SPENDING

By LETITIA WATSON

Send suggestions for topics and requests for info to [yourmoney@you.co.za](mailto:yourmoney@you.co.za). We may answer your questions in this column but won't reply personally.

Most of us have to tighten our belts – even with essentials. Find out from the experts how to make your money go further

### MEDICAL FUND

Find out which doctors, hospitals and other medical service providers in your area belong to your fund's network. Funds negotiate special rates with their network suppliers and the savings are passed on to you. Try to treat everyday ailments yourself, but if in doubt see a doctor. Some think they lose the money in their savings account if they don't use it so spend it all unnecessarily. But they're wrong. This is your money; you don't lose it. So use it wisely, Dries la Grange of BestMed says.

### INSURANCE

Check that your short-term insurer rewards members who claim responsibly and gives you a discount if you've improved the safety measures for your property and vehicles, advises Lizette Erasmus of IntegriSure. If you can afford to do it, you can reduce your premium by increasing your excess. This means your monthly premium is lower but if you have to pay an excess it will cost you more so you need to ensure you have sufficient cash on hand.

### LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

There are more than 100 loyalty programmes in South Africa and most of us have a few loyalty cards in our wallets. But avoid spending money at stores just to earn loyalty points that don't offer value. To benefit, the points must fit in with your lifestyle and spending habits. Choose programmes where the rewards don't expire and you can save up points for big purchases, says Jolandé Duvenage of eBucks. Also ensure the membership fees don't cost more than the benefits.

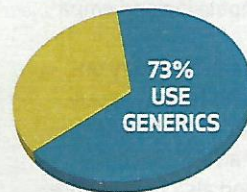
### SHOPPING

Compare the unit prices of products in various volumes. The most popular packaging sizes – and not necessarily the largest ones – are often the most economical, according to Shoprite Checkers. Buy loose fresh fruit and vegetables – it's cheaper than prepacked produce. Don't leave home without a shopping list, and stick to it. Don't buy something you don't really need just because it's on special.

## FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT SAVING

- 1** Why are no-name brands less expensive? They're specially packed for the supermarket, which means savings on marketing, advertising and packaging that are passed on to you.
- 2** Should I read my loyalty programme's newsletter? Yes, stay informed because the rewards system might have changed with you losing some benefits or new benefits added.
- 3** How is my vehicle insurance premium calculated? Premiums depend on among other things the driver's risk profile, the value, age, make and model of the vehicle and the risk of theft.
- 4** Is it really a good offer? Remember: what you save on special offers is seldom more than what you spend on petrol to get to the store.
- 5** Does it matter who the partners in the loyalty programme are? Yes, it pays if you can spend rewards to suit your needs, for instance on travel, online shopping and fuel.

## UP TO 30% SAVINGS



If you use generic versions of your prescription medicine you could save up to 30 percent, says Dries la Grange of BestMed. Research shows about 73 percent of chronic medication (outside hospitals) in SA are substituted with generics. Worldwide it's 80 percent on average.

**TIP!** Use your medical scheme's preventive benefits such as biometric and cancer examinations. They may not only save you money in the long term, but may also save your life.

### GET MORE HELP HERE

- Council For Medical Schemes: [www.medicalschemes.com](http://www.medicalschemes.com)
- SA National Consumer Union: [sancu.co.za](http://sancu.co.za) or 012-428-7122.
- For compliments about good service: [hihelen.co.za](http://hihelen.co.za)

*A hospital should also have a recovery room adjoining the cashier's office*

– AMERICAN HUMORIST FRANCIS O'WALSH