

# HOW A BROKEN HEART AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH



Going through the trauma of losing a loved one affects you mentally, physically and emotionally. Your see-saw emotions can lead to stress, which in turn can lead to a number of serious health conditions. This type of trauma can also bring on an illness in an otherwise healthy person or aggravate any pre-existing conditions.

It has been shown that grief makes you more susceptible to illness. The most common of these include:

- **Infections** – colds, flu and sore throat.
- **Stomach complaints** – ulcerative colitis (colon disease), which results in ulcers or open sores in the colon.
- **Heart conditions** – heart disease and broken heart syndrome, heart failure caused by extreme grief or stress.
- **Cancer** – your risk of developing certain cancers is higher, because your immune system has deteriorated due to the traumatic experience.
- **Depression** – depression is a natural part of the grieving process, however, it can lead to insomnia, lack of appetite and weight loss if you don't seek treatment.
- **Lifestyle** – fatigue, mood swings, irritability, anxiety and stress resulting from extreme grief can cause impaired concentration, decision making and decrease your physical response time to tasks.



## HOW DOES 'HEARTACHE' HAPPEN IN YOUR BODY?

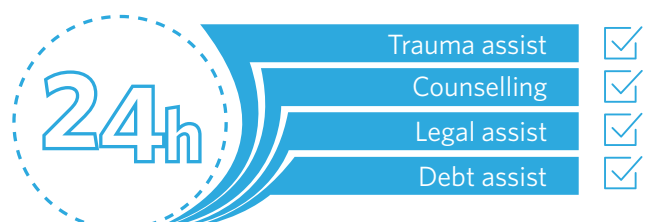


The emotional pain recognition site in the brain is located near the region that senses and interprets sensations, including pain from the stomach and other abdominal organs.

When we suffer emotionally, the brain responds by releasing neurochemicals which we experience in our body as an intense aching in our upper abdomen and lower chest. This is the sensation of aching that we feel when we are experiencing a heartache.

## WHAT ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL STRESS OF ARRANGING A FUNERAL?

When you start to feel like COVID-19 is taking its toll on you and your mental wellness, you can reach out to us through the Employee Wellness Programme (EWP). You and your household have 24/7 access to professional care and support. You also have access to the Hello Doctor portal where you can instantly get expert medical advice.



▶ Education department toll free:  
**0800 111 011**

▶ Send a USSD to:  
**\*134\*664\*38#**

▶ Email:  
**wcged@mhg.co.za**

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