

MY WAKE-UP CALL

We often take our health for granted, relying on our youth to take us through life with ease until old age. However, ignorance isn't always bliss. Four guys share their life-changing health scares – and their gratitude at having a second chance

HEINZ WANKE (42), OWNER OF 3@1 PRINTING IN CRESTA, JOHANNESBURG – MIGRAINES

Wanke's business suffered when he began experiencing severe headaches almost three years ago. Striking without warning, the migraines became so debilitating that he had to give up work for over two years.

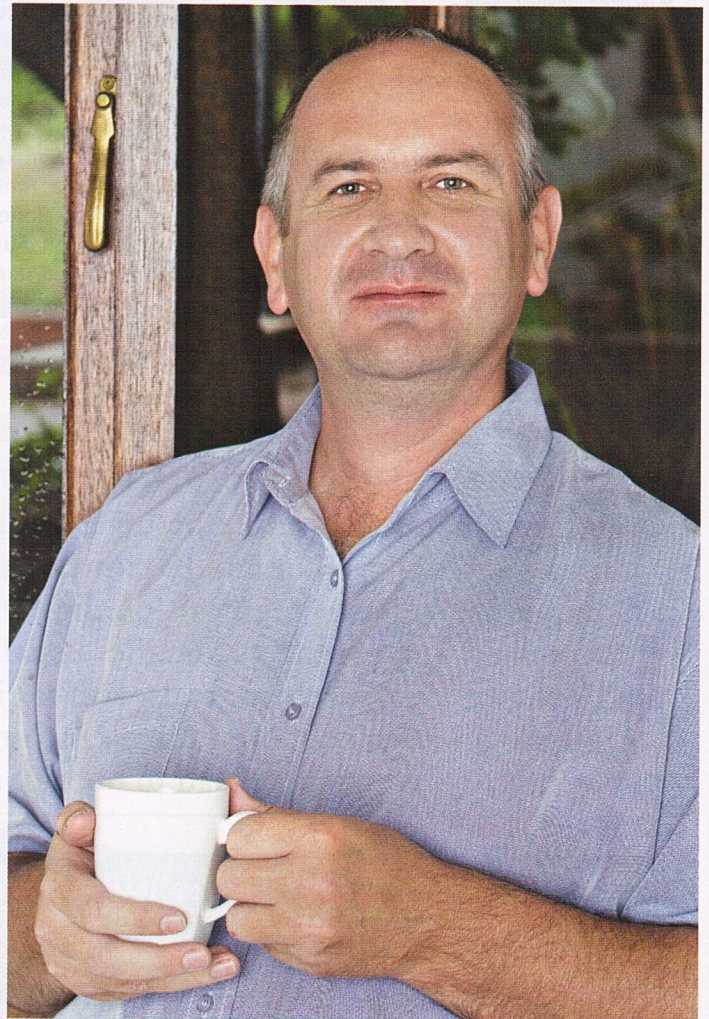
"My mother was a chronic headache sufferer, but at that time medicine wasn't advanced enough to determine what her problem really was. Her condition went on for years and she passed away at the age of 53 from a brain haemorrhage. Suddenly I was getting all the same symptoms she'd had and I was very worried," recalls Wanke.

He consulted various specialists and also did a lot of research to find out the cause before it was too late.

"The headaches were a daily occurrence and I tried a wide variety of treatments that cost over R40 000, after I'd exhausted my medical aid. But nothing worked and the headaches were so severe that at times I'd get an attack while fetching my daughter from school and have to call my wife to come and drive us home," he says.

Wanke became a guinea pig for several specialists trying new ways to get to the root of the ailment. However, after a couple of surgeries and other remedies, the headaches continued to affect him. While he didn't know what was causing them, he suspected that they were hereditary and that stress also played a part.

"About three years into my suffering, I was really desperate and willing to try anything which promised to help end my misery. I went to a GP for an unrelated condition and he told me about a patient of his who was a dietician and had experienced similar headaches until she went to The Headache Clinic, run by Dr Elliot Shevel, and was cured by arterial cauterisation. She was so relieved and impressed by this medical breakthrough



that she went on to study medicine. Upon hearing this, I booked an appointment at the clinic and was diagnosed as having too much blood pumping into my head. I was in hospital for only four hours for the cauterisation and after the procedure, the headaches were completely gone. It was like rebirth for me," he says.

Wanke has since learnt to delegate, address stress and stop bringing work home. He also exercises regularly and follows a healthy diet.

WANKE'S ADVICE:

"If you have a condition that might be hereditary, do proper research and find as much help as possible. Also try to live a stress-free life, exercise, take time off and learn to separate work and family life."