

# Zoie Health - a digital health clinic for women



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Zoie Health Technologies formed by two Black females was launched last year as one of the few digital women's health and wellness clinic - created by women, for women, with a unique understanding of women's health issues.



Dr Nonhlanhla Sitole, cofounder of Zoie Health

We chat with Dr Nonhlanhla Sitole, cofounder of [Zoie Health](#), to find out more.

## ■ ***When, how and why did you get started?***

The idea for the platform was inspired by our personal and professional experience. In Thato Schermer's (cofounder) case, it was a visit to the obstetrician-gynecologist for a contraceptive consult and script that made her realise how expensive and time-consuming it was for women to access basic healthcare services.

For me, the birth of my child came with a period of mild post-partum depression which led me to realise just how misunderstood and taboo this condition remains – and how a sense of community for women experiencing it is sorely needed.

In late 2020, we took a decision to pool our knowledge, with Thato drawing on her years of experience in business development, technology and strategy across several of South Africa's major healthcare companies and technology companies, and me applying the insights I obtained while studying towards a PhD in genetics and molecular biology, with a special focus on cervical cancer; and as a postdoctoral fellow researching HPV vaccines in South Africa.

Our research (which comprised of in-depth interviews with women at different stages of their lives) led us to realise that:

- Women's healthcare services are either expensive or suboptimal
- Digital solutions are being created to solve many needs but we are yet to see a healthcare solution developed for women
- Women have specific health seasons that they experience in their lives such as fertility, pregnancy, motherhood and menopause; but there are few healthcare support services that cater to them through these times
- Women rely on one another for support and advice through the major health season of their lives

We officially launched in August 2021.

### ▣ ***What is the core function of Zoie Health?***

Zoie is a digital health platform with the aim is to make women's and family health and wellness in Africa more convenient, affordable and caring with a focus on family planning, fertility and maternity care. We currently offer virtual care services and subscriptions as well as a community forum where women can connect and engage.

Our goal is to make the entire process seamless, from finding a provider to getting your meds delivered to your home. By making everything tech-based, we are able to simplify, integrate and streamline access to healthcare services.

### ▣ ***What services do you provide?***

We provide the following services:

- Virtual consultations with a variety of healthcare professionals (GPs, midwives, psychologists, doulas, lactation consultants, dieticians and many more) suited to their specific health season
- MyContraceptive is a contraceptive service that includes a virtual consultation with a GP who will help you select the right contraceptive for your needs, with a monthly delivery of your medication to your door.
- A community of women who support and advise each other through the critical health challenges and stages that women experience
- Access to medical professionals who are available to answer questions and give general advice
- Safe, convenient, integrated and holistic health and wellness services
- Educational content, resources and events curated around women's health issues

### ▣ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to face since you started?***

We have struggled with raising awareness and ensuring more women hear about this service.

### ▣ ***Have you received any funding to get Zoie Health up and running? If so, what was the process like?***

Yes, we have received some funding from investors who believe in what we are doing. They share our vision, are passionate about helping us solve this need and support us with technical expertise.

### ▣ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

It's important to build something you believe will solve a serious pain point for your customers. Understand your customers and constantly stay engaged with them so you understand their needs and wants. Surround yourself with a strong team and advisors. And believe in yourself because it's a long tough road, worth all the effort but when you reach obstacles, you're the one who has to keep yourself motivated. Also, work smart and keep a healthy work/life balance.

### ▣ ***Where would you like to see Zoie Health in the next five years?***

We would love to see Zoie in the palm of every woman's hand, where we are the number one solution for a woman's health and wellness needs, no matter her health season. We have many exciting products we aim to launch, including expansion into other regions in Africa, to make access to healthcare more easy and affordable for women on the African continent.

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