



Mater Dei Hospital

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026



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EDITORIAL MESSAGE

Dear Readers

Healthcare is often measured in procedures, prescriptions, and outcomes yet its true meaning lives in the experiences behind them. In this edition, we look at the hospital as a living ecosystem, where healing is shaped by environment, knowledge, compassion, and everyday human stories. From the solar plant that keeps life-saving equipment running during power interruptions, to the little swift birds nesting around our buildings, sustainability becomes part of care itself protecting patients while reminding us that wellbeing extends beyond the ward. We share vital education on prostate cancer and highlight support services that help patients navigate life after diagnosis. Through the perspective of a dialysis nurse, we see how treatment becomes a shared journey built on trust and consistency. Even the simplest details matter every meal served carries intention, nutrition, and dignity, telling a story of recovery one plate at a time. This edition invites you to see healthcare not as isolated acts of treatment, but as a connected system where energy, environment, caregivers, and patients all contribute to healing.

Warm Regards

Michelle Tshuma

Editor



A SEASON OF REFLECTION, COMPASSION & GENEROSITY

As we move through the season of Lent a sacred period in the Christian calendar many people around the world enter a time of reflection, renewal, and giving. Lent commemorates the 40 days that Jesus Christ spent in the wilderness in prayer and preparation. While rooted in Christian tradition, the themes of this season resonate across many faiths and belief systems.

Reflection, self discipline, generosity, and care for those in need are values shared by numerous religious and cultural traditions. Whether through prayer, meditation, fasting, charity, or simple acts of kindness, this time of year offers a meaningful opportunity for all of us regardless of faith background to pause and consider how we care for ourselves and others. Within the Mater Dei community we encounter moments that remind us of both the fragility and resilience of life. This season invites us to slow down, reflect, and renew our sense of purpose. Taking time for quiet reflection whatever form that may take in your personal tradition can restore strength, clarity, and compassion. Many traditions encourage giving to those in need as a path toward spiritual and personal growth. In our setting, generosity is not limited to financial contributions. It is expressed through presence, attentive listening, encouragement, teamwork, and everyday kindness.

Offering support without expecting recognition or reward reflects the highest ideals of pastoral and holistic care. A warm smile, a reassuring word, or a willingness to help a colleague can have lasting impact. This season reminds us that service is at the heart of healing. Clinical staff, support teams and students play a role in creating an environment of dignity and compassion. Small, intentional acts of care can bring comfort and hope to patients and families during vulnerable times. As part of the Pastoral Care Department, we honor the diversity of faiths, beliefs, and world views within our hospital community. During this season of reflection, may we all be inspired according to our own traditions to deepen our compassion, strengthen our generosity.

#Message from - Hospital Pastoral Care department



BETWEEN BEEPS & HEARTBEATS

My Calling as a Dialysis Nurse

My name is Sharon, and I am a dialysis nurse at Mater Dei Hospital.

Every day I walk into the dialysis unit knowing that, for many of my patients, this room is not just a treatment area, it is a lifeline. My day begins as early as 7:00 a.m. Before the patients arrive, my teammates and I prepare the dialysis machines and supplies and review each patient's file.

Dialysis is delicate work that demands absolute attention to detail. Every setting on the machine, no matter how small, matters. These machines perform what the kidneys can no longer do: removing toxins, waste, and excess fluid from the blood to maintain balance in the body.

When the patients arrive, I don't just see people battling illness. I see mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, and breadwinners whose families depend on them despite their condition. Some come in strong and determined, full of life and hope. Others arrive fatigued, frightened, and uncertain of what the future holds. Some quietly ask, "Will this ever end?" Many of them come for treatment two or three times a week, spending five to six hours per session. Over time, we become more than caregivers and patients, we become family.

Each session begins with discussion. We agree on a treatment plan together rather than imposing one. As I connect them to the dialysis machine, I explain every step, reassure them, and carefully watch for any adverse effects. Dialysis can be long and draining physically and emotionally, so providing psychological support is just as important as providing medical care. I continuously monitor vital signs and respond immediately to complications such as hypotension. Education is also part of every session: fluid restriction, diet, and medication adherence. Dialysis does not end when the patient leaves the hospital, so empowering them with knowledge helps improve their quality of life at home. There are heavy days watching someone struggle, lose hope, or saying goodbye to someone you have cared for over years is never easy. But there are also quiet victories; a stable session, improved blood results, a patient discharged from dialysis, and a smile replacing fear.

By the end of my shift, I am tired, but my heart is full. I know I have done more than operate a machine. I have offered comfort, dignity, and care. Being a dialysis nurse is not just my job, it is my calling. Every day reminds me that healing is not only about treatment, but about compassion, patience, and standing beside someone when they need you most.

Written by Sr Sharon Dohuye Head of Renal Unit
If you would like more information regarding dialysis, please contact our clinical team. They will be happy to assist you.
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Email: renalunit@materdeihospital.org



ANTENATAL CARE

Nurturing Healthy Mothers, Supporting New Life

Antenatal care is a vital part of a healthy pregnancy journey. It provides pregnant women and their families with comprehensive medical care, emotional support, and essential education from early pregnancy through to childbirth. Our antenatal care services are designed to ensure the wellbeing of both mother and baby, while empowering families with the knowledge and confidence they need for a positive pregnancy and birth experience. At the heart of our service is a commitment to early identification and management of potential risks or complications. Routine blood tests and ultrasound scans are conducted to closely monitor the health and development of both mother and fetus. Alongside clinical care, expectant parents receive guidance and education on pregnancy, childbirth, new-born care, and the transition into parenthood. Mothers are encouraged to maintain a balanced diet, engage in appropriate physical activity, and avoid harmful substances to support optimal maternal and fetal health. Partners are warmly invited to participate in antenatal sessions, fostering shared responsibility and equipping them with the skills needed to provide meaningful support throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Preparation for birth is approached with sensitivity and care. Through counselling and birth planning, women are supported to express their preferences, address fears or anxieties, and gain confidence as they approach labour and delivery. This preparation helps ensure a more positive, informed, and empowering childbirth experience. Every client is treated with respect, dignity, and compassion in a welcoming and professional environment. Privacy and confidentiality are strictly maintained for all clients, irrespective of race, culture, beliefs, or socio-economic background.

Women's choices are valued and respected at every stage of care. Individual sessions are scheduled according to each trimester and are offered on a one-to-one basis to ensure personalised care. Advice and support are tailored to each woman's medical history, lifestyle, and social circumstances, and appointments are arranged at times that best suit the client. During these sessions, women receive health education on danger signs in pregnancy, common minor disorders, signs of labour, pain management during labour, breastfeeding, and postnatal care. Counselling services help strengthen coping skills and emotional wellbeing,

while nutritional guidance supports healthy eating and appropriate supplementation. Women are also advised on safe physical activities to promote overall fitness and wellbeing during pregnancy. Group sessions provide a supportive platform for shared learning and connection among expectant mothers. These sessions encourage open discussion, experience-sharing, and the building of social networks that often extend beyond childbirth. Topics covered include pregnancy care, labour and delivery, postnatal wellbeing, new-born care, and baby immunisations. Through a holistic and compassionate approach, antenatal care lays the foundation for healthy pregnancies, confident parents, and strong beginnings for new life.

Visit our antenatal Care Dept located in the new complex – Unit 6B

Telephone : +263 778 721 1001



A TASTE OF HEALING

Inside Mater Dei Hospital's Culinary Journey

Step into the heart of Mater Dei Hospital and you'll find more than the hum of medical care, you'll discover a well-orchestrated culinary dance where nutrition, compassion, and innovation blend seamlessly. For patients, meals are more than just nourishment; they are moments of comfort, symbols of hope, and reminders that healing involves more than medicine alone. Pictures throughout this article showcase the variety of meals served and the dedicated kitchen staff who bring them to life, adding a visual layer to the story of care and commitment.

Every plate crafted in Mater Dei's kitchens is evidence of teamwork and expertise. Chefs, Clinician's, and nursing staff collaborate daily to develop menus that balance clinical precision with culinary delight. Meals are meticulously tailored to meet strict nutritional needs from calories and protein to allergies and cultural preferences ensuring every patient receives what's best for their healing journey. Menus are designed to support recovery, addressing everything from diabetes to vegan choices, and always safeguarding those with allergies and intolerances. Every meal honors the diverse backgrounds of patients, offering flavors and dishes that feel like home. The kitchen embraces eco-friendly practices, minimizing waste and using dietary restrictions as a springboard for innovative, satisfying recipes. Every meal tells a story. Patient feedback and shared experiences inspire new dishes and adaptations, ensuring each tray reflects both medical needs and the personal journeys of those served. Special menus for holidays and seasonal celebrations bring a sense of normalcy and festivity, while regular surveys keep the patient's voice at the center of the dining experience.

Behind each meal lies a team fueled by passion, curiosity, and the belief that food is a powerful part of recovery. Whether it's a comforting bowl of soup, a vibrant vegan entrée, or a dish inspired by a patient's story, Mater Dei's kitchen serves up more than nutrition, it delivers care, dignity, and hope on every plate. As you read our story, we invite you to see hospital meals in a new light, not just as food, but as an essential part of the healing journey made possible by collaboration, innovation, and the simple power of a shared meal.



THE LITTLE SWIFT

OUTSIDE THE WARD WINDOW

Morning in a hospital rarely begins with silence. There is the soft movement of trolleys, distant footsteps in corridors, nurses exchanging reports at shift change, and the quiet anticipation of the clinician's round. Then you step onto the balcony slowly, carefully, drawing in cool air that feels very different from the filtered air inside the ward. Above you, cutting across the pale sky, comes a sharp musical cry. It belongs to the Little swift. At first you may hardly notice it, only a small dark shape darting in circles, never landing, never resting. After a few mornings, whether you are a patient regaining strength, a visitor waiting for visiting hours, or a staff member beginning a shift, the sound becomes familiar and almost reassuring. It begins to feel like the day itself has officially started. That tiny bird is doing far more than decorating the sky. Hospitals unintentionally attract insects because lights burn through the night, water collects in gutters and drains, people and food move constantly, and warmth escapes from buildings. All of these create perfect conditions for mosquitoes and flies. The little swift feeds entirely while flying and spends nearly its whole life in the air catching insects invisible to us. A single bird consumes thousands every day continuously from dawn until dusk. So while you wait for medication or the doctor's round, the swift is working an invisible shift of its own, reducing biting insects, lowering disease carrying vectors, and making the hospital surroundings more comfortable without chemicals, noise, or disturbance.

The Hospital is a place of sterility inside; however, it still depends on balance outside. Little swifts remain only where conditions allow life to exist in harmony. Their presence quietly tells us the air is breathable, insects are under natural control, and the building supports an urban ecosystem rather than suppressing it. A hospital with swifts' overhead is not neglected but alive. Recovery is not only medical but also psychological. When patients step onto a balcony after days indoors, they reconnect with the world beyond illness. The looping flight and constant call of the swift provide something deeply human, a sense of continuity. The bird flew yesterday, it flies today, and it will fly tomorrow. For someone waiting for results, treatment, or discharge, this rhythm matters. Natural sounds lower stress, steady breathing, and soften the feeling of confinement so the mind rests even before the body heals. Unlike many urban birds' little swifts do not scavenge food, crowd walkways, or invade rooms. They live high on walls and under ledges using buildings the way they once used cliffs.

The hospital becomes part of their landscape and they quietly repay the shelter. Patients recover, the multidisciplinary team have comfort that they have done a good job, visitors hope, and above them the swifts maintain balance in the air. So, the next time you stand on the balcony inhaling morning air before the ward round, pause for a moment when you hear that high slicing call. It is not just background noise. It is a partner in the environment of healing, a natural controller of insects, a marker of clean air, and a gentle reminder that life continues beyond illness. In a place devoted to restoring health, the little swift is already doing its part.



CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY & PUBLIC HEALTH

Why Our Solar Project Matters

Healthcare is not only about treating illness, it is also about preventing it. By adopting solar power, our hospital is extending its duty of care beyond wards and operating theatres into the environment that shapes community health every day. This project reflects a commitment to cleaner air, safer living conditions, and a healthier future for all in Bulawayo. Many of the illnesses treated in hospitals are directly influenced by environmental conditions. Air pollution from fossil fuels contributes to asthma attacks, chronic lung disease, heart disease, stroke, complications in pregnancy, and increased vulnerability among children and the elderly. Diesel generators, often used during power outages release fine particles and toxic gases. These pollutants can enter hospital wards and surrounding communities, undermining health while care is being delivered. By replacing generator dependence with solar energy, the hospital removes a local source of harmful emissions and protects both patients and staff.

Public health experts increasingly recognize renewable energy as a medical intervention. The World Health Organization identifies air pollution as one of the leading environmental risks to health globally. Reducing emissions therefore reduces disease before treatment is required. Solar power improves the quality of air breathed by surrounding communities, lowering respiratory complications and reducing triggers for asthma and pneumonia, particularly among children. Expectant mothers are exposed to fewer toxic fumes, improving pregnancy outcomes, while long-term exposure to pollutants that contribute to heart disease and stroke is also reduced. Instead of only curing illness, the hospital helps stop illness from developing. Climate change affects health in multiple ways. Extreme heat, drought, flooding, and food insecurity all increase disease burden, and hospitals experience this impact first through rising patient numbers. By shifting to renewable energy, the hospital contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that drive these conditions. This slows the spread of climate-sensitive diseases, and strengthens community resilience. Healthcare facilities must not only respond to climate effects but also reduce their contribution to them, and solar power allows the hospital to do both. The hospital's solar installation benefits more than those admitted for treatment. Families living nearby breathe cleaner air, staff operate in healthier surroundings, and children grow up in a safer environment.

Healthcare responsibility therefore extends into the community, and environmental stewardship becomes part of patient care. Every unit of clean energy produced prevents pollution today and protects health tomorrow. By choosing solar power, the hospital demonstrates leadership in sustainable healthcare where protecting the planet is inseparable from protecting patients. Caring for people now means caring for the environment they live in. Clean energy makes both possible.



WHAT IS THE PROSTATE?

The prostate is a gland found in men. It is usually the size and shape of a walnut and grows bigger as men get older. It sits under the bladder and surrounds the urethra, which is the tube that carries urine (wee) out of the body. The prostate's main job is to help make semen – the fluid that carries sperm.

What is prostate cancer?

Prostate occurs when cells grow abnormally in the prostate. About 1 in 4 men will have this type of cancer, as it is one of the most common male cancer. The prostate gland produces fluid for semen and protein called prostate-specific antigen (PSA). What is the PSA blood test? The PSA test measures the amount of the protein produced by the prostate (PSA) in your blood. It is normal to have a small amount of PSA in your blood, and the amount rises as you get older because your prostate gets bigger. A raised PSA level may suggest you have a problem with your prostate, but not necessarily cancer.

What is an enlarged prostate?

An enlarged prostate is an increase in the size of the prostate due to age. This is not due to cancer. It is also called benign prostatic enlargement (BPE) or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). An enlarged prostate will occur from 40 years of age, and in 50% of men over 50 years. As the prostate grows, it can cause urinary problems. There are ways to treat these urinary problems.

What is prostatitis?

Prostatitis is an inflammation or an infection of the prostate gland. It is not cancer. It is common and can affect men of any age, but it is most common in men aged between 20 and 50. Symptoms vary from person to person and can include urinary problems, aching in the area between your testicles and back passage, or pain in the lower part of your abdomen, groin or lower back.

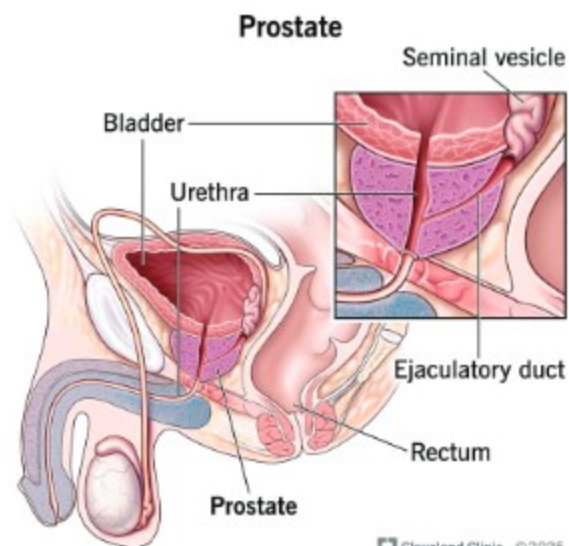
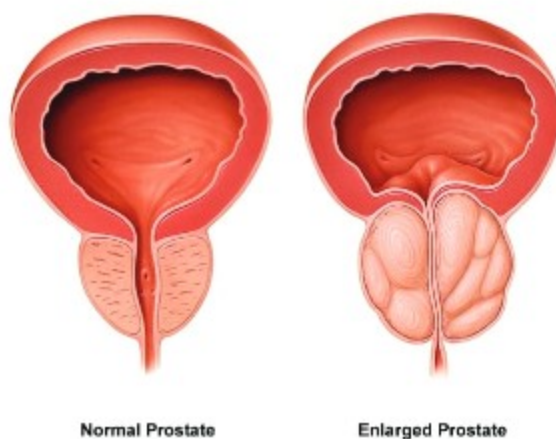
Symptoms of Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer often has no symptoms, especially in the early stages, which is why screening is important. One may have prostate enlargement and prostate cancer. One may have problems urinating like: frequency during the day and night (nocturia), straining, having weaker flow. One may also have blood in the semen and urine, and have difficulty getting or maintaining an erection.

Who is at risk?

Your risk of developing this cancer type is higher if you are of African descent (black), have a family history of prostate cancer or over 50 years of age. There is also some risk associated with being obese. Screen of the prostate can be done by a general practitioner or specialist urologist. From there, the doctor will assess you after asking you important questions. Relevant tests will be done and discussed with you. Early detection ensures complete cure. But late detection does not mean a death sentence. The disease can be control efficiently with hormonal manipulation and other added treatments by a urologist and oncologist.

Written by Dr J Kusano.



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PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND COSTS

Your Care Journey at Mater Dei Hospital

Being admitted to hospital can feel overwhelming. At Mater Dei Hospital, we believe that clear information helps you feel confident and in control. This guide explains how admissions and billing work, so you can focus on your recovery with peace of mind.

Understanding Hospital Admission Fees

Hospital fees are separate from Clinician fees. For surgical procedures, patients should be aware that three professional fees usually apply: the Surgeon, the Anaesthetist, and the Surgical Assistant. Some support services are provided by external partners and carry separate charges, including laboratory testing, physiotherapy, and advanced imaging such as CT scans and MRI.

For admission, all patients are required to present a valid ID, a current medical aid card (if applicable), and have a surety sign the admission forms.

Cash Paying Patients and Deposits

Cash-paying patients must provide a doctor's referral letter, which helps determine the required hospital deposit.

A deposit is an upfront payment made toward the total cost of your hospital stay. Once the deposit is paid, admission is confirmed. If your stay extends beyond the value of your deposit, an interim account and top-up request will be issued. At discharge, a final account is prepared showing total costs against your deposit. Any credit balance will be refunded, while outstanding amounts are payable within seven working days.

Understanding Treatment Shortfalls

A shortfall (or co-payment) is the portion of medical costs not covered by your medical aid or insurance and therefore payable by you. Shortfalls may arise from hospital charges, specialist or anaesthetist fees, radiology, or pathology services.

They generally occur when medical aid benefit limits are reached, when certain consumables or medications are not fully covered, or when emergency procedures are performed without prior authorization.

Planning Ahead to Avoid Surprises

Before admission, we encourage you to confirm benefits with your medical aid, obtain necessary authorizations, and ask your doctor whether they charge medical aid rates. After discharge, review your statements and contact our Accounts Office if you need clarification.

We Are Here to Help

Understanding healthcare costs can be confusing, but you are not alone. Our Accounts Department is available to assist before or after your hospital stay.

Accounts Department

Email: creditcontrol@materdeihospital.org

Cell: 0772 382 552 / 0783 030 030 / 0773 064 835

Your Rights as a Patient

You are always welcome to request cost estimates, ask questions about your account, receive clear explanations of charges, query medical aid rejections, and request assistance before making payments.

#Your health is our priority and so is your peace of mind.



FEEDBACK

As we continue to open our doors to the wider community, we welcome your feedback to help us improve our services.

Kindly send your comments to the attention of the Public Relations Officer at these email addresses:

melisancube@materdeihospital.org

info@materdeihospital.org

We are always ready to listen, because our hospital is your hospital.



CONCLUSION

As we conclude this edition, we reflect on the meaningful work that takes place beyond the high-rise building and the green, lush lawns that surround them. These stories offer a glimpse into the dedication, swift decision-making, collaboration, and advocacy that define our teams each day. At the heart of it all is a shared commitment to patient-centred care.

Every interaction, every decision, and every effort reflects our responsibility to place patients and their families first. Through compassion, professionalism, and teamwork, our staff continue to uphold the standards of care.

As patients and visitors move through our spaces, they may notice the little swifts flying gracefully above the buildings. These birds have become a quiet yet powerful reminder of the environment of healing that surrounds us. They are part of the living ecosystem that shares this space with us symbolising resilience, continuity, and the partnership between people and nature in supporting wellbeing. As our community continues to entrust us with their health and wellbeing, they can remain confident that our teams are committed to giving their best, for every patient.

#Together, we continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives we serve.



Mater Dei Hospital

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