

# ZITHULELE HOSPITAL

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

### BOOKING AND PLANNING YOUR ELECTIVE

#### **Booking your elective**

Please book your elective well in advance by emailing Dr Taryn Gaunt ([mamagaunt@gmail.com](mailto:mamagaunt@gmail.com)) Due to accommodation restraints we are currently only able to host a maximum of three students at any one time. We prefer longer elective periods so that you get the most out of being at the hospital and in the area. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to South African students in cases of clashes, something we hope our overseas students will understand.

For bookings to come from January 2012, we will be asking foreign students for a deposit of R1500 to secure your booking. We have had to introduce this due to certain students abandoning us for “better” electives at the last minute, or sometimes simply not arriving. The account details will be forwarded to you when you contact Taryn. A refund of 80% is offered should you need to cancel with six months’ notice. Exceptional circumstances will be understood and accommodated at our discretion.

#### **Registration**

South African students will already be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. Foreign students who have been accepted for an elective at Zithulele should email Dr Gaunt for information on Registration of Foreign Students. All students are required to bring some original proof of their registration as a student at their university.

#### **Indemnity**

The rural community we serve is still not particularly medico-legally aware, so the chance of adverse medico-legal incidents is extremely small. Nevertheless, it is prudent to have cover if possible. In South Africa the Medical Protection Society offers free cover to registered students. (email [medprotection@global.co.za](mailto:medprotection@global.co.za)) Foreign students should make enquiries with the MPS or similar insurers in their home countries if they feel the need.

#### **Elective cost**

The cost of doing an elective at Zithulele is R50 per person per day for South African students and R100 per person per day for foreign students. Please note that this includes:

- Accommodation, in a building owned by the local church (see below). Your contribution helps support their work in the community.
- Someone to clean the accommodation twice a week (and keep track of the inventory there)
- A contribution towards developing further accommodation options in our community.
- Not to mention the fantastic experience! (Which we throw in for free ☺)

#### **Getting here – flights, car hire and directions**

##### Flights

- Fly into Johannesburg, then catch a connecting flight to East London (on 1Time [www.1time.aero](http://www.1time.aero) or SAA [www.flysaa.com](http://www.flysaa.com)) or Mthatha – usually an expensive flight (SAA).
- Alternatively, fly into Cape Town and then fly to East London (either on 1Time or SAA) and catch the bus as above; or fly into Durban and then take a slightly longer (about 8 hours) bus ride south to Mthatha.

##### Road

- If you fly into East London (200km from Mthatha) or Durban (400km) you could catch a bus to Mthatha (Greyhound [www.greyhound.co.za](http://www.greyhound.co.za) is the best option. We do not recommend SA Roadlink [www.saroadlink.co.za](http://www.saroadlink.co.za) due to their poor safety record).
- Another good option is the Baz Bus ([www.bazbus.com](http://www.bazbus.com)) which offers a hop-on-hop-off service between backpacker establishments. You will then need to catch the shuttle to Coffee Shack Backpackers [www.coffeeshack.co.za](http://www.coffeeshack.co.za) in Coffee Bay. If you are flying in to Mthatha on the flight

arriving at 16h55 you will arrive too late for the shuttle and will need to stay overnight in Mthatha.

- If you need to stay in Mthatha there are plenty of options. One recommended one is La Maison. Contact Charlet on +27 (0)83 301 2677. Email [charlet@telkomsa.net](mailto:charlet@telkomsa.net).
- Another option which offers shuttle from the airport is The White House. Contact +27 (0)47 5370850 or email [whitehouse@intekom.co.za](mailto:whitehouse@intekom.co.za)
- Depending on when you are arriving we will try and arrange for someone to collect you in Mthatha (100km from Zithulele). Alternatively, if you catch the shuttle to Coffee Bay we will try and get someone to collect you there. *Please note that although no-one has ever been left stranded, it remains your responsibility to get to the hospital. Even Coffee Bay is one hour's drive each way for us!*
- We strongly recommend that you consider hiring a car (from Avis [www.avis.co.za](http://www.avis.co.za) or Budget [www.budget.co.za](http://www.budget.co.za) or others) which you can collect in East London or Mthatha. This will allow you much greater flexibility to explore the area. Most cars can make it to Zithulele despite the potholes, but if it is wet check with us beforehand if your car lacks clearance. A simple VW Chico will handle the roads fine although perhaps not the one down to the beach.

#### Directions by road:

- Very detailed directions for those coming by road are available via the [Directions](#) page on the website. Please read these and print these out so you don't get lost.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation is provided over the road from the hospital by the local Dutch Reformed Church (the one that started the hospital). A new student block has replaced the previous rondavel. It offers twin rooms (you will have to share, depending on occupancy), shared kitchen and bathroom facilities and a communal living space. It has electricity and piped water. Someone will clean it twice a week, but laundry and general cleanliness remain the responsibility of each individual. There is a R100 deposit applicable to the accommodation; this be returned to you when you return the keys after an inventory check. Please bring your own bedding, and remember to organise food (see below) as neither are included in the elective cost.

There are no lodges, backpackers, campsites or other accommodation available in the immediate surrounds. We do, however, recommend that you explore on weekends, and especially recommend a weekend with a local family. This will enrich your experience here as you discover the realities of rural living while having fun at the same time. Check out [www.mbolompohomestay.weebly.com](http://www.mbolompohomestay.weebly.com) for more details.

### **Food, petrol & banks**

The nearest petrol station is in Mqanduli (1 hour away), so if you are driving here fill up as you pass through. The nearest bank is in Mqanduli. Banking hours are 09h00 to 15h30. There is a rural supermarket at Ngcwanguba, about 30km away, but the nearest "proper" shops are in Mthatha. There is a small "spaza" local shop in the village but it is quite expensive and has a small range of items. There are no take-aways! Please make a plan for food before you arrive. If you are staying for more than two weeks you will probably need to get fresh supplies, but there is usually someone from the hospital going into town or away for a weekend and they can be approached to help.

### **Cell phones / mobile phones / internet**

There are no working public phones available. There is, however, good cell phone reception as we have a mast at the hospital. International students who have their own mobile phones should try and buy a starter pack from either Vodacom or MTN before arriving at the hospital. (These supposedly cost R199 but are discounted to less than R5 in most retailers!) The hospital does not have access to the internet for students. Most professional staff use their own laptops and connect using their phones as modems. Wireless broadband (HSPDA) is available if you have the necessary hardware. Buying prepaid data is the best approach.

### **Health**

We strongly suggest that international students have medical insurance that will cover your time in South Africa. Although the hospital is well able to treat minor medical conditions, if you develop a

serious illness or are involved in an accident the best facilities are in the private sector and they won't even look at you without insurance.

In addition to the standard immunisations you should have had as a child, you will also need immunisation against Hepatitis B to work here. We also recommend Hepatitis A vaccine and tetanus and measles boosters. You do not need a yellow fever shot unless you are from a yellow fever endemic area. You may want to consider rabies vaccination – there is rabies in the area although it is rare. Rabies vaccination is available at the hospital if you are unfortunate enough to be bitten, though. We have anti-retroviral medication for post-exposure prophylaxis against HIV should you suffer a needlestick or splash injury despite taking universal precautions.

The hospital is not in a malaria area, so prophylaxis is not needed. If you plan to visit Mpumalanga Province (Kruger National Park), Limpopo Province or the north of Kwa-Zulu Natal Province you will need to take medicine, starting a week before you're in the area. Prophylaxis is available in South Africa. Bilharzia is endemic in this area, but easily avoided if you don't swim in stagnant water. For safety sake you can check your urine about a month after arriving back home. It is easily treated with Praziquantel.

### **Money**

South African currency is the Rand. (R1=100cents) The exchange rate is about US\$1=R7.50 but fluctuates quite a bit. Check for the latest on [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). Credit cards are widely accepted in the towns and at formal tourist establishments, even on the Wild Coast. Payment for your accommodation at the church, however, will be in cash as there are no such facilities in Zithulele!

### **Weather**

The best weather is between February and June, when days are sunny and clear. Average temperature is about 26°C. From August onwards, it starts to get a bit windy and the summer rains usually start in about September. It rains quite regularly from September to about February or March – often for a few days at a time. The average temperature from June to September is about 20°C, but during cold spells can be quite a bit colder. As summer nears, the days in between the rain are glorious, with temperatures into the thirties and sunset after 19h00. The wind starts to diminish in the new year. As with weather all over the world, this is not guaranteed! Please be prepared for rain and for cold spells at any time of year, but don't forget the swimming costume/trunks/gear!

### **Some things to remember to bring**

Please bring your own bedding! That includes a sheet to cover the mattress. A good sleeping bag or duvet is a good idea, especially in winter. Also remember to bring something warm to wear. (There is no central heating!) Weatherproof clothing and gum boots ("wellies") may help when it gets a bit wet and muddy around the accommodation, as will a torch, especially a headlamp if you have one. Books will help keep you occupied during the quiet evenings. Insect repellent will encourage any mosquitos to go elsewhere.

### **Contact details**

The Hospital's physical address is Zithulele Hospital, Zithulele, Mqanduli District, 5080, South Africa. The postal address is P Bag X504, Mqanduli, 5080. If you are actually planning to post something, however, it is best sent to Drs Gaunt at PO Box 682, Mqanduli, 5080. The hospital phone number is +27 (0)47 5750203 and fax is +27 (0)86 6165457. Dr Taryn Gaunt's cell number is +27 (0)82 3782336.

### **Further tourist information**

There are numerous good websites that will give you more information about the thousands of amazing places to explore in South Africa. One of the best all round sites, though, is [www.safrica.info](http://www.safrica.info)