



The
Hearty Digest

SUNWAY
MEDICAL CENTRE
Sunway City

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www.sunwaymedical.com

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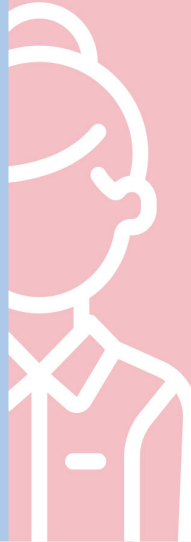
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Hi readers, it's been a while! Since this is the first issue of the year, let me start off by wishing all of you a Happy New Year! Also, Happy Chinese "Niu" Year to those who celebrated, albeit what might look quite different for many families this time. Still, I hope you had a meaningful one.

Truth be told, 2021 does seem like an extended 2020 so far. It is as if I just discovered that the ending to the book I was reading is still being written and the genre seems to be changing! At times, I admit it leaves me a little woozy...have you ever felt that way? Yet, I remain hopeful as the days unfold. So chin up, smile and read on!

“ This issue is special on so many levels and I truly hope that you will find some gems to cherish through the pages. We took a new creative spin and the release in March also gave us the inspiration to focus on women, in conjunction with the celebration of International Women's Day on March 8.

This is a wonderful time to pause, reflect and remember the struggles women face for a more equal place across all levels of society. Today, this movement continues to live on because there's still a long way to go. But this month, we celebrate the great strides we have made today.

So do take a trip down memory lane with us to 50 years back and be catapulted into the present day with three uniquely inspiring stories as told by our very own female healthcare professionals. If you are a woman reading this, join us to learn about your health and some useful tools and tips that you can consider adopting into your everyday lifestyle! Remember, the women agenda is not just for females but it means a more inclusive place for all (yes, men included). I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I enjoyed bringing it to life.

'Till the next one, cheers!

Joanne Tay,
Editor, Hearty Digest

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A Message from The CEO

Let me first greet you with a Happy New Year! And followed by a heartfelt gratitude to all who have stayed with us throughout a challenging 2020. It is no secret that it has been one roller coaster ride for many industries, including healthcare. Lockdowns, masks, social distancing and travel restrictions have definitely reshaped our world in ways we would have never imagined.

Thanks to your continuous support, we were able to weather through the ups and downs. Amidst a challenging climate over a lingering pandemic, our continuous growth has been made possible by a collective effort made up of valuable individuals associated with us - be it our doctors, staff members, partners, supporters or patients. We truly appreciate your unwavering trust in Sunway Medical Centre when it comes to healthcare needs.

In times of adversity, I believe that there is always room for innovation. One silver lining COVID-19 has brought us is the accelerated rate of digital transformation. Due to the pandemic, patients are more open to adopting new technology. This has made it easier for Sunway Medical Centre to carry out our digital transformation plan, which aims to improve patient care and experience, accessibility to healthcare services, as well as operational efficiency.

In early January this year, we launched the Telemedicine Command Centre for our new patients who may require a second opinion on medical-related issues, providing first-level advisory services to patients remotely. We want to continue in this trajectory of innovation and venture into new approaches to serve healthcare needs in the 'new normal' we live in today.

Also, in conjunction with the International Women's Day celebration this month, it is an opportune time to honour the women in our lives. I have always been tremendously proud of the women in our midst. Whether they are our doctors, nurses, housekeeping, kitchen, customer service or admin staff, their labourious love in the work they do despite having to juggle many hats is something that we must not take for granted.

In Sunway Medical Centre, we are invested in women's health. We understand that when a woman is healthy, happy and supported, she can play a strong role in her family and community. Here, we deliver high-quality and comprehensive care from gynaecological health to family planning services. More than just physical support, our experienced team of healthcare professionals understand the emotional, mental and physiological needs of a woman.

With this, I sincerely hope that 2021 holds a better and healthier year for all of us. At the time of writing, the COVID-19 vaccines have arrived on our shores and our hospital has kicked off Phase 1 of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for our frontliners and those from ten other private hospitals. It is an exciting time and I am hopeful that if we work together and remain positive, we can turn this year around to our favour. Until the next issue, stay healthy, stay safe and hopefully, we will all get vaccinated!

Bryan Lin

Chief Executive Officer, Sunway Medical Centre

DO YOU KNOW?

1971 vs 2021: 7 Things Women Can't Do 50 Years Ago

When it comes to the progress and achievements of women today, it is important to remember how far we've come. 1971 didn't seem that long ago but believe it or not, women weren't allowed the freedom to many things that we may have taken for granted today. To put things into perspectives, here are just 7 things women were unable to do just 50 years ago. Befuddled much?

1. Get her own credit card

Up until the Equal Credit Opportunity Act in 1974 in the United States, married and unmarried women couldn't get credit cards without a man's signature. This also meant that women were frequently issued card limits up to 50% lower than males.



2. Get access to contraceptives

A woman's right to decide when and whether to have children were only openly discussed in the 1960s. It took several years for birth control to be approved for use by all women, regardless of marital status. More than contraceptives, this also meant that a woman could complete her education, work and plan her own future

3. Join the army



The army was probably the last thing women thought about as a career back then. For context, the most well-known military training academy, The United States Military Academy (USMA), first welcomed women cadets only in 1976.



4. Admit to the Ivy League

Getting an admission into an Ivy League institution such as Harvard, Cambridge or Yale was almost unheard of. For instance, Columbia University was an all-male institution until 1983.

5. Keep their jobs when pregnant

You read it right. Women could still be fired at their jobs for being pregnant until 1978!



6. Complaint about sexual harassment at work

Although the phrase "sexual harassment" was coined in 1975 but it wasn't commonly used except by lawyers and educators until the 1990s.



7. Practice law

Celebrated female lawyers like the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg may make us forget that 50 years ago, having a law career was rather impossible for a woman. Up until the 1960s, New York University (NYU) reported that 90% of law firms in the U.S. refused to interview women for placements.

Sources: CNN, Open Culture, Medium

In The Spotlight



Celebrating Women in Healthcare: Beyond The White Coats and Stethoscopes

*A special feature in conjunction
with International Women's Day*

In conjunction with the International Women's Day this March, we celebrate the advancement of women in our society against the odds. In Sunway Medical Centre, we take pride in the achievements and progress of women in the fields of Science, especially healthcare. We believe that a higher representation of women in the sciences and gender equality are both vital to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development towards a more inclusive future for all.

In this issue, we feature three of our very own female personalities who embodies passion, strength and resilience. Wearing their hearts on their sleeves, get to know each of their unique and inspiring stories through these pages.

Dancing Her Way Into Medicine

Dr. Janani Sivanathan
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
(Maternal Fetal Medicine)



"My grandmother wanted to be a doctor but the war came. So she had to give up her dream. Instead, she made sure that my brother and I took our education seriously. I supposed you could say that she was our tuition teacher in Math's & Science and you bet, with the rotan!"

With fond memories of her grandmother tucked close to her heart, Dr. Janani went on to become the first doctor in her family. Inspiration came early for her. Even at the age of 12, she knew she wanted to pursue a career in Gynaecology but her story isn't one without the struggles against perceptions.



A baby Dr. Janani and her beloved grandmother, who inspired her to pursue medicine.

Growing up, while her parents were supportive of her education, they had their own beliefs that girls should be more domesticated and a demanding career in medicine would interfere with family life. So she was encouraged to pursue other fields in the sciences that could provide more predictable hours and almost had her hands in Biotechnology.

But in college, Dr. Janani found her turning point when she met her forward-thinking principal. Armed with two daughters of her own who are doctors, Mrs. Nadarajah challenged the belief and managed to influence Dr Janani's parents to allow their daughter pursue her passion. And there began her arduous pursuit of medicine. As if that wasn't demanding enough, Dr. Janani who has been dancing since the age of 5, was also pursuing her graduation in classical Indian dance and singing. What an all-rounder!

Fast forward to today, Dr. Janani is a mother of two teenage boys who credits her accomplishments to her supportive husband. She continues to teach dancing and serve with such a clear purpose and motivation behind her practice - that sheer joy of being a part in her patients' journey in birthing new life and being there to ease their pains when complications occur during a pregnancy.

"I remember a couple (first-time parents) who had come from Penang to see me for a second opinion. At that time, the mother was in her second trimester but they found out that more than three quarter of their baby's lungs were filled with fluid. They have been advised to terminate the pregnancy and this was obviously, a devastating news."



Dr. Janani and her supportive family



Dr. Janani, the classical Indian dancer.

"After a scan, the baby looked absolutely normal to me besides the lungs condition. So, we did a procedure to remove the fluids and I followed up throughout her pregnancy. When the baby was born, she was perfect and that made me so happy. 2 years later, I saw the couple again when they came for a follow-up with the paediatrician. Their baby has grown up to be such an adorable and healthy toddler," Dr Janani recounts with joy.

A doctor, a wife, a mother, a classical Indian dancer, teacher and more, Dr. Janani shows us that with the right family support and grit, a woman can be successful both in her career and family. She believes that no one should be limited by their gender. And in her wise words,

“ You mustn't settle for mediocracy. Always give the best of yourself in whatever that you pursue. This way, you can look back without regrets.

If you see her around, don't be fooled by her first impression that could exude an air of seriousness. She is really a lot friendlier than she looks! All it takes is just a smile and you know you're in good hands.

From Daddy's Little Helper to the World's Few Female Orthopaedic Oncology Surgeons

Dr. Chye Ping Ching
Orthopaedic Oncology

"My dad was a music teacher who enjoyed carpentry as a hobby. Growing up as the youngest in the family, I was very close to him and constantly tagged along. He didn't seem to mind my company and soon, I was daddy's little helper who simply found joy in taking things apart, passionately curious on how things work and having a go at fixing them. You name it – alarm clocks, bicycles, TVs. I absolutely loved tools and repairs. It was a lot of fun!"

Going into medical school years later, Dr. Chye Ping Ching did so well in Obstetrics & Gynaecology that she thought it was the career path for her. But life seems to have surprises in store - her first houseman posting at Universiti Hospital in the Orthopaedics would alter the course of her future.



Dr. Chye performing a surgery

"Orthopaedic surgery fascinated me! It was so different from what I've learned in medical school and I immediately fell in love with all the tools in the operation theatre. What a reminiscence of my childhood! I still remember my very first surgery - assisting and observing from the sidelines while the surgeons in the room struggled to delicately insert screws into the hip of the patient. So I volunteered and with one try, the rest was history."

Dr. Chye happily considered the operation theatre as her second home and spent long hours honing her craft. She derived her satisfaction from being able to see her patients walk again and get back to ordinary life. But her story is not a common tale.



Dr. Chye in one of her solo trips to the Himalayas, Nepal.

It is estimated that there are only about 500 bone tumour surgeons in the world today and about 10 in Malaysia. Orthopaedic has the lowest percentage of women in a surgical specialty and continues to be a male-dominated discipline. In fact, orthopaedic surgery is notoriously demanding in terms of commitment, surgical skills and delicate attention to details, notwithstanding mental and physical stamina of the surgeons.

This only puts weight into perspective as Dr. Chye rose to become Malaysia's second female orthopaedic surgeon in the year 2000 after a long gap to the now-retired Prof. Dato' Dr. Tunku Sara Tunku Ahmad in 1988. Dr. Chye was also the first female Chinese to do so.

To add to her accomplishments, she was elected as the President of Malaysia Orthopaedic Association in 2019/2020 and the first female President of the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association. Just last year, she banded with like-minded medical professionals globally to start the International Orthopaedic Diversity Alliance that focuses on women and the minority.

Now in her 50s, Dr. Chye is not slowing down anytime soon and generously shares her knowledge with the younger surgeons. She is a mother of two grown-up daughters, who followed her footsteps in the fields of medicine. And she continues to be the handywoman around the house, enjoys a good read and classical music. Mind you, she plays the violin and harmonica! Dr. Chye is quite a wanderlust – making solo trips yearly to enjoy her own time traversing the world to recharge.

“My late mother was my strongest pillar of strength. She stayed with me for a long time until she passed in 2016. She would ensure that my children were well taken care of when she was still alive. A supportive family and spouse are equally important and I'm grateful that my children were raised to be independent since young.”

Dr. Chye hopes that her journey can inspire many girls and women to pursue their interests despite an uphill climb in certain fields,

“ We need to pave the way forward for the younger generations and showed them that it is possible. And a woman herself must also be willing to persevere what may come her way. I humbly hope that if I can, so can you. ”



Dr. Normayah on her graduation day

A Kampung Girl's Dream of Boarding School and Studying Medicine

Dr. Normayah Kitan
Breast & Endocrine Surgery

"I am the eldest of eight siblings. In the 70s, that meant you are your parents' right hand – responsible to care for your siblings and house chores. My dad was an odd job worker and my mom was a housewife, so life wasn't easy and the value of education wasn't a priority. But somehow, I managed to do pretty well in school and I'm thankful for that until today."

Dr. Normayah recalls growing up in the village life of Banting back then as being carefree yet having a strong motivation to do well in her studies. When she entered lower secondary school, she had her mind set to study medicine. In the 80s, being a doctor was highly touted and she saw a chance for a better future for herself and family.

With a dream bigger than her petite built and harsh realities, she was determined to leave her kampung life behind in pursuit of a place in boarding school. She believed that the right environment will help her to excel better. Her efforts paid off when she landed a placement in Sekolah Menengah Sains Teluk Intan, Perak after a second attempt. So began her arduous journey to medicine at the age of 16.

"I left home with little and only got to see my family during long school breaks. I continued to do well in my studies and that motivated me to do even better. Eventually, I did my matriculation in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the competitive environment edged me forward. Honestly, I was a bit lost in my first year because I was placed in a hostel with students across various Science courses. But I knew, I cannot afford to fail because I was on a government study loan. In the second year, I finally made it into the Medical faculty! I laboured the hours – study, exams, repeat. There was no luxury of time or budget for anything else."



A teenage Dr. Normayah [second from the left] with her cousins and relatives in her kampung

In her houseman posting in the 90s, she had the good fortune of working with a fun group of surgeons. However, she noticed the stark contrast that a majority of surgeons were male at that time with only one female surgeon where she was at. Even as a houseman, Dr. Normayah had a healthy competitive spirit within her to be the best of her batch and would seize every opportunity to assist the surgeons. In doing so, she discovered her gift in performing procedures and thoroughly enjoyed the process. This would eventually shape her career. She went on to specialise in Breast & Endocrine because as a woman herself, she understood the importance of putting female patients at ease during consultation and developing a trusted chemistry together.

But her path was laid with doubts in the fabrics of society at that time. She remembers vividly that the Head of Department in Hospital Kuala Lumpur questioned her decision to become a surgeon because of how demanding this would be to her personal life. Since she was still single then, Dr. Normayah was primed to see things through. But as the saying goes, love meets you when you least expected it and that was true for her. She met her now-husband during her second year of Masters, got married and gave birth to a baby boy the following year. Even when she was heavily pregnant at 36 weeks old, Dr. Normayah was still on-call.

“ Sometimes we wear so many hats and care for everything (and everyone) around us that we forget about appreciating ourselves first.

“After my son was born, he had prolonged jaundice and we knew we needed someone dedicated to care for him as I got back to work. Eventually, we sent my son to my parents in Banting and became weekend parents. Every weekend without fail, we made trips to my kampung while I was cramming my thesis. That was one of my most challenging times and I almost gave up. If it wasn't for my husband's encouragement, I probably wouldn't have made it. Thankfully, he was understanding because he is also a surgeon.”



Dr. Normayah (second from the right) during her housemanship

Fast forward to today, she is glad that gender equality has come a long way in the fields of medicine and encourages women to pursue what they enjoy most. Being a woman herself, she leaves us with these gems, “Sometimes we wear so many hats and care for everything (and everyone) around us that we forget about appreciating ourselves first. If ever someday, you are diagnosed with an unfortunate illness, please don't put things off. You must seek treatment as early as possible. It is also important for a woman to have her own support system and a trusted community to share her journey with.”

As a Breast & Endocrine surgeon, Dr. Normayah sees her patients first as a woman and understands each of their unique journeys. When not found consulting and treating her patients, she enjoys reading mystery and crime, and daydreaming! If she did not end up as a doctor, she would probably pursue her fictional interest as an Inspector.

AT A GLANCE: WOMEN AND HEALTH

What's at stake, ladies?

Facts We Should Care About

28% of Malaysian women are not physically active



Women are more likely than men to get admitted to hospitals: 37.2% of the reported admissions are women of reproductive age (20-49 years old)

45% of females have a higher raised total cholesterol level compared to 32% of males



Female adults have a higher prevalence of depression (2.6%) compared to male adults (2.0%)

3 in 4 women aged 40 and above never had a mammogram



1 in 2 women aged 18 and above did not practice Breast Self-Examination (BSE)

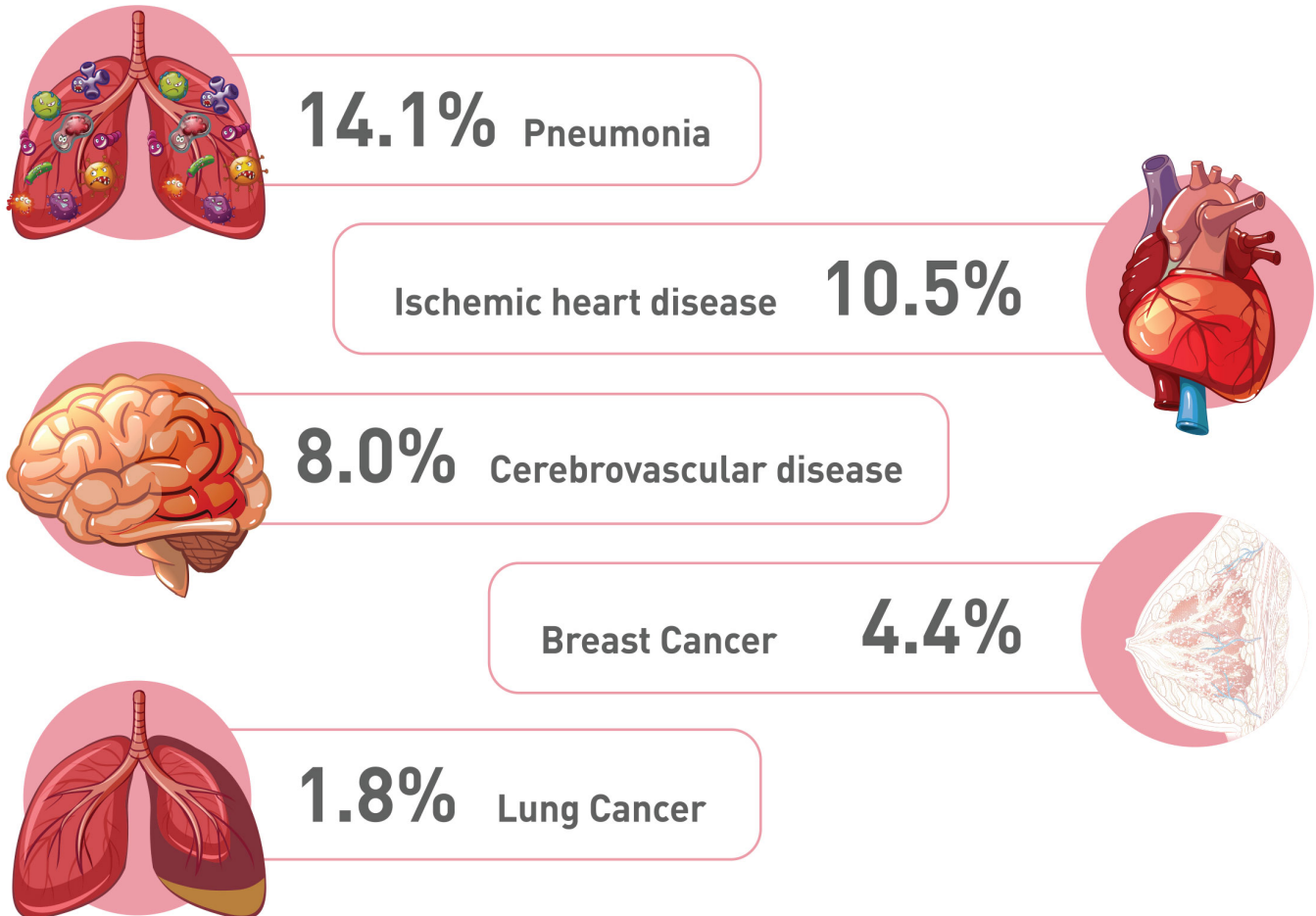
60% of women aged 20 and above did not undergo Pap smear test in the past 3 years



(Source: National Health & Morbidity Survey 2019 by the Ministry of Health)

AT A GLANCE: WOMEN AND HEALTH

Top 5 underlying causes of death among Malaysian Women (2017):



[Source: WHO Malaysia: Country Fact Sheet 2019 - Public Health at A Glance]

Top 4 reproductive health concerns for women



[Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]



Your Everyday Wellness



Health Tips and Tools

We know that a healthy and balanced lifestyle does wonders for our health, but do you know that it affects our mental health too? This includes improving sleep, relieving stress, and having less anxiety. So, here are our recommendations to help you stay moving and motivated!

Home Workout



MadFit Youtube Channel

Working out has never been easier at the convenience of your own home and time. Follow Canada's top YouTube creator in 2020, Maddie Lymburner, with over five million subscribers. "MadFit" covers a variety of training, including HIIT, strength yoga and stretching. And if you love dancing, you're sure to have fun while breaking a sweat with one-song workouts!

Price: FREE (at your own time and place)



Fitbit Sense

If you don't already own a smartwatch, consider the latest stylish and advanced smartwatch from Fitbit that helps your body to manage stress, heart health with an ECG app, SpO2, skin temperature and more. It also comes with a built-in Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa for voice commands. Perfect when you are on the go.

Price: Starting from RM 1,400



Healthy Eats



Kubis & Kale

If you are looking for a wholesome, fuss-free and muslim-friendly healthy food, Kubis & Kale has got you covered. They are available for delivery or self-pickup from their store located in Sunway City. One thing's for sure, healthy food isn't boring food! You can follow them on Instagram @Kubis_Kale to wet your palette.

Price: Starting from RM 12.90

Tips from #SunMed Doctors

“ Hi expectant mothers! These are 10 simple tips from our **Obstetrics & Gynaecology Consultant, Dr. Janani Sivanathan:**

1. If you are planning to conceive, schedule a check-up to ensure that all is well.
2. Folic acid is a pregnancy's best friend. Do start taking during your pre-conception stage.
3. Eat healthy and in moderation. You don't always have to eat for two, listen to your body (and baby!)
4. Keep an active lifestyle. Go for walks, yoga, swimming and just keep moving.
5. Do things that make you happy – listening to music, painting, reading.
6. Start bonding with your baby even in your womb.
7. Always have a delivery plan! Discuss with your doctor on your preference but be prepared for Plan B.
8. Drink enough fluids post-delivery, especially if you are breastfeeding.
9. Keep a good hygiene post-delivery, especially if you had a cesarean. You can always take a bath in warm water.
10. Most of all, enjoy your pregnancy. Embrace this wonderful journey!



Dr. Janani Sivanathan is available for consultation at Sunway Medical Centre on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. You may make an appointment via our website or call +603-7491 9191 (ext. 16554).

Tips from #SunMed Doctors

“ If you are considering a screening for cancer or was recently diagnosed, this is what our **Breast & Endocrine surgeon, Dr. Normayah Kitan** has to say:

1. Prioritise yourself and go for a screening or seek treatment. Don't put it off.
2. Always think positively. Don't google too much and don't dwell in dark thoughts.
3. Talk to someone close whom you can trust. Remember, you are not alone and you will get through this with the right support.

Dr. Normayah Kitan is available for consultation at Sunway Medical Centre on Mondays to Saturdays. You may make an appointment via Sunway Medical Centre's website or call +603-7491 9191 (ext. 16507/11472).



#SunMed Highlights

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HOURS



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DIAMOND *is a*
WOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Shine with our best grade of care

At **Sunway Medical Centre**, we understand that every woman deserves the best care. We deliver high-quality and comprehensive care from Gynaecological health to family planning services. From pre-natal and post-natal care to infant development to wellness for mothers and babies, we've got your best interest in mind.

More than just physical support, our experienced doctors and nurses understand the emotional and physiological needs of a mother and her child. Let our best grade of care bring out the brilliance in you.



Kindly contact us at:

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Monday – Friday : 8:00am – 5:30pm
Saturday : 8:00am – 1:00pm
Closed on Sunday and Public Holiday

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