



# POSITIVE PREGNANCY & BIRTH BOOKLET

Your guide to  
Maternity Care at  
Swan Hill District  
Health



**Swan Hill**  
District Health  
Connected Care. Best Experience.





Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) provides a comprehensive and quality service for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

### Your Journey with SHDH

- Preconception
- Pregnancy and Antenatal Care
- Booking In Appointment
- Midwife Clinic
- Obstetric Antenatal Care
- Childbirth Education Classes
- Labour and Birth
- Shared Care - Birthing Outside the Region
- Post natal Services

### SHDH Medical Imaging Department

### SHDH Aboriginal Health - Kapel Telkuna Mallee District Aboriginal Services

### Enhanced Access to Allied Health Services

- Dietetics
- Dental
- Physiotherapy
- Exercise Physiology

### Other Support Services

- Refugee Health
- Social Worker

### Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding Support Service

### Pregnancy and Mental Health

- For parents 25 and under
- For parents over 25
- Digital Mental Health Resources

### Post natal Services

### Baby Friendly Health Initiative

### Pregnancy Journey Map

### Early Years Online Hub

### Important Contacts





# YOUR JOURNEY WITH SWAN HILL DISTRICT HEALTH

## **Preconception**

If you're thinking about having a baby, some things you should consider include reducing alcohol intake, quitting smoking, exercising regularly, eating well and checking in on your emotional health. Talk to your GP for more information.

## **Pregnancy and Antenatal Care**

- You should book your first pregnancy appointment with your GP between 6 and 10 weeks. The first round of blood tests and ultrasounds will be ordered and reviewed.
- As soon as your pregnancy is confirmed, phone the SHDH Midwifery Department (03 5033 9269) to schedule your Booking In appointment. It is best to have this appointment between 12 and 16 weeks. There can be a waiting list, so it is best to call as soon as possible.
- Care for your pregnancy is generally provided at the Midwife Clinic, with support from the SHDH Obstetric team. Care for women with higher risk pregnancies is led by the SHDH Obstetric team, with regular Midwife appointments.
- If you have any concerns throughout your pregnancy, speak with your GP or Midwife.

## **Booking In Appointment**

For women birthing in Swan Hill, it is important to have your Booking In appointment at SHDH Midwifery between 12 and 16 weeks, so that any early treatment can be commenced.

- This will be a long (1 hour) consultation with a Midwife, to ensure the Maternity team have all of the information they need to provide you with the best care.
- You will have the opportunity to discuss your birthing options and plans, and the Midwife will identify any further needs, such as breastfeeding, physiotherapy, counselling, dental or dietetics support.
- You will receive relevant information to your pregnancy and upcoming birth, and be able to organise childbirth education classes.
- If you are birthing outside the region, it is highly recommended that you still attend a Booking In appointment at SHDH. SHDH will continue to be your closest centre for assessment, support, and emergency maternity care. We are able to provide the best care when we have access to your pregnancy information and health history.



## Midwife Clinic

The Midwife Clinic has 30 minute appointments to ensure you are able to ask any questions you may have and also ensure you and your baby are coping well throughout the pregnancy.

- Pregnancy care is provided according to the national guidelines, including: physical checks, baby's growth, organising ultrasounds and mental wellbeing.
- Getting to know your Midwives during pregnancy ensures you have some familiar faces when the time comes to birth your baby and helps prepare you for your labour and birth.

There is no direct cost for the Midwife Clinic service.

## Obstetric Antenatal Care

An Obstetrician is a Doctor who specialises in pregnancy, birthing, postnatal and gynecological care. During your pregnancy you will see the obstetrician as part of your routine antenatal care at least once, or more often if required.

If any concerns or complications are identified, or increased monitoring is required during your pregnancy, your care will be reviewed and managed by the Obstetric team in conjunction with your Midwife.

There is no direct cost for seeing the Obstetrician.

## Childbirth Education Classes

Childbirth Education Classes are offered to pregnant women and their partner or support person. Facilitated by a Midwife, the class focuses on late pregnancy, labour, breastfeeding and early parenting. If you are planning to attend a class you will be booked in by your Midwife.

The class is held on the third Sunday of each month from 9am until 4pm, at the SHDH Education Centre (62 McCrae Street). There is no cost for the class.

Contact SHDH Midwifery for further information

**Phone: 5033 9269**



## Labour and Birth

The Maternity team of Registered Midwives, Specialist Obstetricians and GP Obstetricians work together to guide you on your journey.

- Experienced Midwives support women and families during labour and birth.
- SHDH Obstetricians are available 24 hours a day to consult and manage care should concerns arise during labour and birth.
- SHDH Anaesthetists are available for epidural, and a 24 hour theatre team for Emergency Caesarean if required.
- Complete service for planned Caesareans.
- Midwives and medical staff are educated in advanced neonatal resuscitation.



## Shared Care - Birthing Outside the Region

SHDH Maternity works in collaboration with other health services, including Bendigo, Mildura and Echuca, and other Metropolitan services.

If it is recommended that you birth outside this region, your care will be provided by a team, with the goal of providing the safest possible care for you and your baby. SHDH will continue as much of your antenatal care, as close to home as possible in collaboration with your birthing service.

SHDH will continue to be your closest Maternity service and will be available to you 24 hours a day for advice, assessment and urgent treatment. We continue to be committed to you and your baby's wellbeing. It is important that you still book in with SHDH Midwifery for your care.

The contact for 24 hour advice and pregnancy assessment is **5033 9269**

## Transferring back to Swan Hill District Health for Postnatal Care

SHDH Midwifery Department is renowned for the quality of our postnatal care. If you have birthed at a service outside the region, you are encouraged to transfer back to SHDH Midwifery to complete your recovery and have early parenting and breastfeeding support along with access to all SHDH services including Allied Health.



# SHDH MEDICAL IMAGING DEPARTMENT

Your GP or Obstetrician/Gynaecologist may refer you to the Swan Hill District Medical Imaging Department for ultrasound scans

Ultrasound scans are a very important part of your healthcare plan throughout your pregnancy, they allow us to not only check on the health and wellbeing of your baby but check on the progress of your pregnancy and we love being a part of your journey.

To book in for an ultrasound scan please email your request form to [radiology@shdh.org.au](mailto:radiology@shdh.org.au). The Radiology staff will need your form prior to making a booking. Once you have sent us your form please call the Radiology department on 5033 9286 to book your appointment. When booking in for your appointment, please let the Reception staff know if you would like an interpreter for your examination.

It is important that you book in for your ultrasound scan as soon as you get your Radiology request form to ensure your scans are able to be performed at the appropriate gestation age, as there may be a waiting list for appointments.

At Swan Hill District Health Medical Imaging Department, we are dedicated to providing you with the highest quality medical imaging services. We help you see your health clearly, ensuring accurate diagnoses and peace of mind. With industry leading medical imaging equipment and highly trained staff you can be confident we are providing the best possible service for our rural patients and ensuring Connected Care, Best Experience every time.

SHDH Medical Imaging Department team are here for your pregnancy and early childhood journey.

**Phone: 5033 9286**





# SHDH MEDICAL IMAGING DEPARTMENT

## **What can you expect at your obstetric ultrasound scan?**

Eager anticipation, excitement, mild trepidation, nervousness – these are common pre-scan emotions experienced by almost everyone. Your sonographer is here to guide you through this experience. Your sonographer will perform the ultrasound examination and the Radiologist will provide the final report to your doctor.

Before the ultrasound exam begins, your Sonographer will explain what will happen throughout the overall process and what you are likely to see on the ultrasound at your expected stage of pregnancy. Some ultrasound exams take longer than others to study and to capture all the required images. This is normal and may be because of the position of the baby or because your pregnancy is at a stage where it's hard to see some aspects of the baby because it is too early to see, such as the heart beat or certain parts of the baby's body. You may be asked to change your position, go for a walk or other movements throughout the examination to assist in changing the position of the baby which may or may not work. This is also a normal part of an obstetric ultrasound examination. Your sonographer will talk to you about any relevant exam issues.

You may need to have a follow up appointment or ultrasound exam. This may happen when the findings of the exam are unclear (e.g. because we are unable to get our standard views of the baby due to the baby's position) or when another professional's expertise is required.

You can expect honesty, understanding, and kindness. We understand that everyone's situation and pregnancy is different, and we are here for you, please inform us if there is anything we can do to make your examination as comfortable and stress free as possible, and we will try our best to help. You can expect open communication, particularly in the event of unexpected findings. Please feel free to ask questions, we will attempt to answer your questions to the best of our ability, but we may need to follow up with colleagues, when required, for better explanation. Should you need some time or a private space after your ultrasound exam, please let your sonographer know.



## SHDH ABORIGINAL HEALTH - KAPEL TELKUNA

Kapel Telkuna, our SHDH Aboriginal Health team, can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their journey through SHDH by promoting connected care and better experiences.

The team can:

- Provide you and your family with Cultural and social support
- Talk with your doctors, nurses or allied health staff at your request
- Assist you with any concerns and provide you with other options where appropriate
- Help you understand any information you are unsure of

**Phone: 5033 9323 or 5033 9868**

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## MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) provide the following services for antenatal and post-natal care.

- Antenatal midwife
- Aboriginal Health Workers - immunisations
- GPs and Paediatrician
- Allied Health
- Telehealth for specialist appointments
- Koori Families First Educators
- Playgroups

**For more information phone 5032 8600 or call in at 70 Nyah Road, Swan Hill.**



# ENHANCED ACCESS TO ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

## Dietetics

Good nutrition during pregnancy is critical, and nutritional advice from a Dietitian has been shown to improve health outcomes for both for babies and mothers. Pregnancy is a great time to improve your food habits, which can set you and your growing family up with good nutrition for life. A Dietitian can provide nutrition and dietary advice to help meet the extra demands of pregnancy to help give your baby the best start. We can also help manage pregnancy discomforts such as nausea and constipation and ensure the food you eat is safe for you and your growing baby. Pregnant women have a higher risk of developing a food borne illness, so pregnant mothers need to be more cautious about their food choices to keep their baby safe.

Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) is a form of diabetes that occurs in pregnancy. One in every eight pregnant women in Australia will develop GDM and is usually diagnosed from 24 - 28 weeks with an oral glucose tolerance test. Your diabetes team, including your Obstetrician, Diabetes Nurse Educator and Dietitian, will support you during this time. A Dietitian can help you learn how food choices can help you achieve your target blood glucose levels, and maintain the health of you and your baby.

You can see a Dietitian at any point throughout your pregnancy. We offer individual consultations from Community Health Monday to Friday, and you do not need a referral.

**Contact Community Health on 5033 9337 or speak with your Midwife**

## Dental

All pregnant women are eligible for a free initial visit with Swan Hill District Health Dental Services via a referral from a Midwife. Maintaining good oral health during pregnancy is important for you and your baby. The hormones that help your pregnancy can affect your gums and teeth. Severe gum disease has been linked to babies being born too early and too small. It's also vital to treat tooth decay in pregnancy to reduce the decay-causing bacteria you can pass onto your baby. Coming in early to get help and advice is the best way to prevent issues. It is safe to visit the dentist while pregnant.

**Contact SHDH Dental Services on 5033 9336 or speak with your Midwife**



## Physiotherapy

During and after pregnancy, women can experience minor or significant musculoskeletal discomfort including back, pelvis and hip pain. Physiotherapy can help to assess and improve this discomfort, address any strength or function concerns, and may also aid you in your post-natal recovery. Labour TENS machines, a drug free pain relief method that can be used during labour, are available for hire from 37 weeks of pregnancy.

Specialised Continence Physiotherapists can also help with any issues you may have with your continence and pelvic floor muscles during the antenatal and post-natal periods.

Following the delivery of your baby, specialised Paediatric Physiotherapists are also able to assess and help with any concerns you may have with regards to your baby. This may include, but not limited to, the assessment of milestones and management of common positional conditions such as torticollis, plagiocephaly and positional talipes. They also offer a Hip Clinic to screen for suboptimal hip development in your baby. Additionally, in combination with the Occupational Therapists and Speech Pathologists, Physiotherapists also run a Prematurity Clinic for any infants born prior to 37 weeks gestation.

Appointments are available in the outpatient Physiotherapy Department and the Continence Clinic.

## Exercise Physiology

Regular physical activity during pregnancy has numerous potential health benefits. These may include reducing pregnancy related complications such as pre-eclampsia, hypertension and gestational diabetes. It can also assist in minimising excessive weight gain, improving fatigue and stress levels. Our Exercise Physiologist will provide you with education regarding the best form of exercise for you. They can also set you up with an appropriate and safe home exercise program to keep you active throughout your pregnancy.

**Phone Allied Health on 5033 9390 or speak to your Midwife**



# SHDH - OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

## **Refugee Health Nurse**

The Refugee Health Program provides assistance with health needs of refugees and asylum seekers living in the Swan Hill District. The Refugee Health Nurse will use an interpreter (as needed) to help you with understanding your health needs and access to services. The Nurse can also attend appointments with you if preferred.

You **DO NOT** need a Medicare Card to access this service.

**Phone 5033 9337 or speak to your Midwife**

## **Social Worker**

The Midwifery Unit at Swan Hill District Health offers any new mum or young couple who are having a baby the chance to own and rehome essential baby and children's items. Between the volunteers who clean and check each item, to every donor and partner who helps make it all possible, we are working together to make a difference. The hospital social worker and volunteer Jan ensure each item is cleaned and ready for use by the many babies born in the Mallee region every year.

All items are sourced from Our Village, a Victorian charity combining three established baby charities: St Kilda Mums, Geelong Mums and Eureka Mums. Goods range from prams/joggers, clothes to fit newborns to 14-year-old siblings, cot and bassinet sets - right down to nappies and wipes. All items are provided free of charge, and on request, car seats and cots are routinely supplied and installed by Maternal & Child Health staff at Swan Hill Rural City Council (phone: 5032 0300) to any parent in need.

**Social Worker Cynthia can be contacted on 0499 772 273; and volunteer Jan on 0478 607 361; or speak to your Midwife**



# BREASTFEEDING

Exclusively breastfeeding for the first 6 months is recommended by the World Health Organisation and the National Health and Medical Research Council. At around 6 months, with the introduction of solids, breastfeeding is recommended to be continued for up to two years of age and beyond.

Breastfeeding can be challenging at any stage but especially in the first few weeks. During pregnancy, it is important to consider how you will feed your child and who will support you. The vast majority of women, provided with adequate support, are able to breastfeed successfully.

There are many benefits to breastfeeding, including;

- Nutritionally correct and adapts to your growing baby
- Protection from infection and disease
- Convenient, time saving and free
- Reduction of breast and ovarian cancer risks for mother

Your Midwife will discuss breastfeeding at your Booking In appointment. You will receive help and support to establish breastfeeding while in hospital and can continue to access support from Midwifery up to 6 weeks post birth.

## **Breastfeeding Support Service**

You can also access outpatient breastfeeding care from skilled Midwives, including an Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), at the SHDH Breastfeeding Support Service - located at Community Health, 125 Campbell Street, Swan Hill. Home visits are also available and there is no cost for this service. Antenatal group education and individual appointments are available, call to learn more. You are also very welcome to attend a Breastfeeding Support Group session to meet other locally who are breastfeeding.

**Phone Community Health on 5033 9337 or speak to your Midwife**

### **Further Reading:**

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breastfeeding](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breastfeeding)

[www.raisingchildren.net.au/breastfeeding-bottle-feeding](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/breastfeeding-bottle-feeding)

[www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

[www.bfhi.org.au](http://www.bfhi.org.au)



# BABY FRIENDLY HEALTH INITIATIVE (BFHI)

Swan Hill District Health is dedicated to becoming a Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) accredited health service. BFHI is about improving healthcare for babies, their mothers and families. The role of BFHI is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding based on the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. These standards ensure all mothers and babies receive appropriate support and up-to-date information during both the antenatal and postnatal period, regarding infant care and feeding. At SHDH we support all feeding choices.

## The TEN STEPS to Successful Breastfeeding

### 1 HOSPITAL POLICIES

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 2 STAFF COMPETENCY

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 3 ANTENATAL CARE

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 4 CARE RIGHT AFTER BIRTH

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 5 SUPPORT MOTHERS WITH BREASTFEEDING

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 6 SUPPLEMENTING

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 7 ROOMING-IN

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 8 RESPONSIVE FEEDING

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 9 BOTTLES, TEATS AND PACIFIERS

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...



### 10 DISCHARGE

Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by...





# PREGNANCY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is important in any stage of life, especially during pregnancy and post-partum. Optimal mental health for expecting parents is important to help them navigate changes they may go through, but also to support your baby's wellbeing and growth.

Here are some tips for a healthy headspace that can apply to parents at any stage of the pregnancy journey – from antenatal through to post-partum:

- Stay active – regular exercise can help you manage stress and boost your mood. Ensure that exercise is conducted with the support of a health professional such as a physiotherapist.
- Create connections – spending time with people who support you is a great way to strengthen your mental health. This might be with a parent support group, family members, or close friends.
- Get in to life – keep doing the stuff you love to do and that are important to you. It can be easy to be focused on the new baby's needs, however its just as important to try and keep meeting your own needs. This might look like playing music, learning new skills, or reading a book.
- Eat well – not only does this help with your mood and energy levels but also helps the baby's nutrition!
- Get enough sleep – getting good quality sleep can give you more energy, improve concentration, and helps protect your mental health. We know this can be challenging when becoming a parent – try and lean on your support networks for some breaks as able.





## For parents 25 and under

Headspace can help support you, and it's all free! We have a few different support services we can offer:

- Mental health support
- Dietitian
- Housing support
- Work and study support
- Legal support
- Physical and sexual health support
- Alcohol and other drug counsellors
- Eheadspace (online support)



How to refer:

- Call us on 4010 7100 or free call 1800 975 115
- Self-refer in-person or online
- Send us an email: [headspace@shdh.org.au](mailto:headspace@shdh.org.au)

## For parents over 25

Swan Hill District Health Counselling Service can support you for free too. We can help support with:

- Relationships/family
- Grief and loss
- Stress and anxiety
- Smoking cessation
- Family violence support
- NSP – needle exchange
- Circles of Security Parenting Class
- Good Thinking Group for anxiety and depression
- And more – visit [www.shdh.org.au](http://www.shdh.org.au) for more info



**Swan Hill**  
District Health  
Connected Care. Best Experience.

How to refer:

- Self-referral, GP referrals, ACSO referrals
- Phone 5033 9880
- Email [CReception2@shdh.org.au](mailto:CReception2@shdh.org.au)

# Digital Mental Health for New and Expecting Parents

## HOW CAN DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH HELP?

Taking care of yourself while parenting during the early years also benefits the wellbeing and emotional adjustment of your baby. While you may be time-poor and lacking a routine, digital mental health services can offer information and support when you need it.

Digital mental health services are programs, tools or applications delivered online or over the phone. These are designed to help Australians of all ages with mild to moderate mental health symptoms. Some services can be used in crisis or as an 'in-the-moment' coping tool, while others are designed as full treatment interventions, with modules to complete over weeks or months. They may be self-driven or practitioner guided and can be used alone or in combination with face-to-face therapy.

Scan to download a free PDF version from the eMHPrac Website



## DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH CAN HELP YOU:

### For Parents

- Cope with low moods, anxiety, or everyday stress.
- Manage your changing roles, relationships, and identity.
- Access mental health support specifically developed for fathers.
- Learn when to seek further mental health support.

### Parenting Tools

- Building confidence in coping with pregnancy, the birth, and parenting.
- Find parenting tips to assist you in caring for your baby.
- Learn how to work together with your partner as parents.

## Crisis Support



Suicide Call Back Service

### Suicide Call Back Service

National 24/7 professional telephone and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide.  
[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)  
1300 659 467 (24hrs)



Beyond Blue

### Beyond Blue Support Service

Telephone, online and email counselling for people going through a tough time.  
[beyondblue.org.au/get-support](http://beyondblue.org.au/get-support)  
1300 224 636 (24hrs)



### 13YARN

Australia's first Indigenous-led crisis helpline providing 24/7 telephone support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.  
[13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)  
13 92 76 (24hrs)



### Lifeline

24/7 phone counselling, and online crisis support chat available each evening.  
[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)  
13 11 14



1800RESPECT  
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT COUNSELLING SERVICE

### 1800RESPECT

Phone and online counselling for people seeking help for themselves or someone else in domestic violence situations.  
[1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au)  
1800 737 732 (24hrs)



### Brother to Brother Crisis Line

Phone support for Aboriginal men who need to talk to someone or are struggling to cope.  
[dardimunwurro.com.au/brother-to-brother/](http://dardimunwurro.com.au/brother-to-brother/)  
1800 435 799



# OTHER POST NATAL SERVICES

## **Maternal & Child Health**

This service is provided by our local council and include an initial home visit within your first week at home by a Maternal & Child Health Nurse. They will then provide centre based visits at regular stages, from one week of age until 5 years. All new parents and new parents to the area are invited to the New Parents Program, a weekly group education session from 8 weeks to 4 months.

**Phone: 5032 8600, 24-hour telephone service 13 22 29**

## **SHDH Midwifery**

The Midwifery Unit will provide continued support through a post discharge home visit and telephone support to you and your infant up to 6 weeks of age.

**Phone 5033 9269**

## **The INFANT Program**

This program is designed to provide the opportunity for parents of young children to learn about healthy eating and active play in a relaxed and supportive environment. The focus is on learning about key messages from each other with guidance and advice available from a health professional. There are 4 sessions over the first year of life. The program is free to attend for you and your child. For more information,

**Phone Community Health 5033 9337, 125 Campbell Street, Swan Hill**

## **Allied Health**

Post natal care is available to you after birth, see services and contact details listed above.

## **Post-Natal Exercise Group**

The post-natal exercise group is an eight-week program, run by a Physiotherapist or Exercise Physiologist, that provides exercises and progressions to facilitate post-natal recovery, support abdominal separation and back or pelvic pain. You can bring your baby with you.

**Phone Allied Health on 5033 9390 or speak to your Midwife**

## Pregnancy Journey Map





Early Years  
Online Hub

# Early Years Online Hub

Access early years' information and services  
within the Swan Hill Local Government Area.

The Early Years Online Hub covers just about everything parents and carers  
need to know about raising children.

- 🌸 Early childhood services
- 🌸 Resources and information for families
- 🌸 Playgrounds & family friendly walks
- 🌸 Breast feeding & changing facilities
- 🌸 Services specific to your town
- 🌸 Event listings for young children



[www.earlyyearsonlinehub.org.au](http://www.earlyyearsonlinehub.org.au)



**SHDH Midwifery**

Phone: **5033 9269**

**SHDH Medical Imaging**

Phone: **5033 9286**

**Community Health**

Dietetics, Breastfeeding Support Service, Refugee Health

Phone: **5033 9337**

**SHDH Dental Services**

Phone: **5033 9336**

**SHDH Allied Health**

Phone: **5033 9390**

**headspace Swan Hill**

Phone: **4010 7100**

**SHDH Counselling Department**

Phone: **5033 9880**

**SHDH Aboriginal Health Unit (Kapel Telkuna)**

Phone: **5033 9323**

**Mallee District Aboriginal Services**

Phone: **5032 8600**

# CONTACTS



**Consumer  
Approved**

**In an emergency, phone 000**