

JANUARY 2026



NEWSLETTER

Community Health

Learn about our key healthy lifestyle messages and community services.

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Happy New Year!

Welcome to 2026 from all of us at Community Health. We are here to help you with your health and wellbeing, from individual advice and care through to community wide action and advocacy.

This newsletter will provide health and wellbeing tips and advice, details about our people and our services, updates on health promotion actions, and opportunities for you to get involved in what is happening in our area.



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

Meet our team

Gayle is our Community Health Senior Manager, and has been working at Swan Hill District Health for many years.

Gayle has a background in Dietetics having started her career as a Dietitian, working across public health and in clinical settings providing nutrition support and dietetic consultation in acute, aged care and outpatient clinics. She became manager of Dietetics and then the Health Promotion team.

Gayle currently manages Community Health which includes Community Nursing and Health Promotion, and also Social Support Program. She is passionate about improving health and wellbeing outcomes for our community, and strives to improve better access to services and health care locally.



Gayle loves spending time with her growing family and her friends, holidays, cooking, gardening, reading and relaxing on the Murray!

Drivers of Family Violence Workshop

Women's Health Loddon Mallee are coming to Swan Hill to deliver an in-person Drivers of Family Violence Workshop. This workshop is open to anyone working in community settings, including workplaces, health, education and community organisations. This interactive workshop will explore the root causes of family violence, identify examples and strengthen capacity to promote respectful relationships and safety within families and communities.

Date: Tuesday 24th February 2026

Time: 1:30pm – 3pm

Venue: Swan Hill Club, Glencoe Room

For more information please contact Hayley via email: hdavis@whlm.org.au



Move more often

Do you have a new year resolution to increase your physical activity?



Swan Hill and District have a lot to offer!

Check out our Physical Activity Options Guides here:

- [Physical Activity Options for Adults](#)
- [Physical Activity Options for 5-12 years](#)
- [Physical Activity Options for 0-5 years](#)

Go to our website under Health Promotion to download a copy if you can't access the above links.

Physical Activity Options

Tips for school starters!

Starting school is an exciting time for students and families. It can be a big step particularly for those starting prep/foundation or moving to secondary school.

10 tips to get ready for prep/foundation

- Practise the journey to and from school
- Arrange play dates with families who will have kids at the same school
- Encourage independence – skills like dressing, packing and carrying a bag, applying sunscreen and going to the toilet
- Label all belongings
- Talk about and practise any after school arrangements
- Check start and finish times and where to drop off and collect your child
- Be positive, get your child excited, and talk about any worries they have
- Visit a library and read with your child
- Start using the name of their new teacher to help build familiarity
- Establish predictable routines including dinner, bath time and bedtime

Learn more at <https://www.vic.gov.au/tips-starting-school>



*Meet Sharnee
our friendly and caring
Paediatric Nurse*



Paediatric Nurse Led Clinic

The Paediatric Nurse Led Clinic provides local support for community clients in accessing telehealth appointments with a Paediatrician. Paediatrician consults generally require a GP referral.

The Paediatric Nurse can assist with:

- gathering of relevant information to support referral
- liaison with GP and Paediatric services
- attending Paediatrician telehealth appointment with client and family/carer
- support with follow-up Paediatrician and GP appointments, including support with service navigation and treatment education.

For more information contact Community Health on 5033 9337.

Please note some exclusion criteria apply to this service.



Sexual and Reproductive Health

Valentines day marks National Condom day!

National Condom Day is an opportunity to celebrate safer sex and relationships. We believe everyone has the right to learn about sexual health so we can have healthier relationships, and safer, consensual, and pleasurable sex.



Cruisin' for Condoms - Swan Hill's Road Map to Safer Sex

This February, Community Health is putting safer sex on the map because sexual health is everyone's business! In the lead-up to National Condom Day, Swan Hill District Health – Community Health, together with Youth Inc, headspace Swan Hill, Swan Hill Regional Library, and Mallee District Aboriginal Services, is launching:

Cruisin' for Condoms – A Road Map of Safer Sex in Swan Hill.

The campaign shows where free condoms are available 24/7 across town. Each day, a new location will be revealed on Swan Hill District Health social media, with posters around town. On National Condom Day, the full map will be released.

Grab condoms at: health services, youth services, libraries, and other community spaces – via dispensers or discreet baskets. Privacy, choice, and confidence are all part of the plan.

Quick safer sex tips:

- Condoms protect against STIs and unplanned pregnancy
- Check expiry dates and use water-based or silicone lube
- No condom? It's always okay to pause, talk, or say no

For free condoms you can always pop in and see us at Community Health (SHDH)

📍 125 Campbell Street, Swan Hill | 🕒 Weekdays 8:30am–5:00pm

It's not just free condoms & sanitary items that we offer, these are provided alongside confidential sexual & reproductive health care, including STI screening, contraception advice, unplanned pregnancy support, cervical screening, and more.

Everyone is welcome – all genders, ages, cultures, sexualities, religions, and abilities.



Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month - February

Ovarian Cancer risks & causes:

The exact causes of most ovarian cancers are unknown, but certain factors may increase the risk.

- Knowing your family history of cancer is important, including any family history of ovarian cancer, breast cancer or colon cancer.
- Understanding your risk of inherited gene variants, including BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, or having a genetic condition such as Lynch Syndrome.
- Other risk factors include: increasing age, medical conditions such as endometriosis, tobacco smoking, use of hormone replacement therapy, obesity.

Each year in Australia around 1,900 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. In most cases the cancer will be diagnosed at an advanced stage, where it is very difficult to treat, it has the poorest survival rate of any female cancer in Australia.

Support more research funding, greater access to affordable treatment and better outcomes through donating to <https://donate.ovariancancer.net.au/>



Women's Health

Food for All



FOOD FOR ALL
SWAN HILL REGION

Food for All Swan Hill Region (FFA) was established in 2018, and core strategies include Edible Gardening, Connecting to locally grown food, Emergency Food Relief, and Food Literacy and Healthy Food in settings.

To learn more about Food for All actions, check out the recently updated website at <https://www.foodforall.community/>

The website outlines details about the Food Hub, how to Volunteer with FFA, current events like the monthly Fresh Food Swap, and many Resources including Recipes.

Food Access and Shopping Tips

A great resource that can be downloaded from the FFA website is the **Food Access and Shopping Tips booklet**.

This booklet provides information about:

- local food relief services
- local and Melbourne meal delivery services
- shopping tips
- edible garden information
- local supermarkets, ethnic supermarkets, local fruit and vegetable shops and butchers
- and more...

Download [here](#)



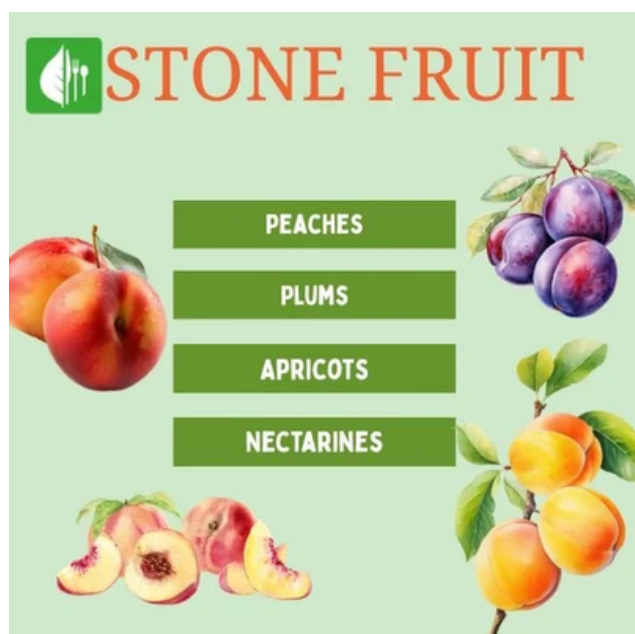
Stone fruit

Stone fruits are grown in our Swan Hill region. Stone fruits are a seasonal summer crop, and include peaches, plums, apricots and nectarines.

Learn how to store and extend shelf life and use stone fruit in delicious ways, in the recently published Stone Fruit resource, see [here](#).

Check out the following tips and recipes in the guide

- Nectarine and green bean salad
- Apricot smoothies
- Plum chutney
- Peach Panzanella Salad
- Jams and Preserves



Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding Public Support



Back in 2018 we had a focus on supporting women to breastfeed in public to promote not only their right to do so but also the ease in feeding a baby **'Wherever, whenever'** which was the campaign slogan. Unfortunately breastfeeding rates have continued to fall with the latest data (2024) demonstrating locally that infants fully breastfed at around 4 months is 48% compared to 60-64% Australia wide.



We know that support matters, not only support provided by health professionals such as our Breastfeeding Support Services, Midwifery Team and Maternal and Child Health Nurses, but also from partners, families, friends and our local community. Seeing mothers breastfeed in public places like supermarkets, waiting rooms and cafes promotes the message that it is accepted, celebrated and welcome.



Lets all work together as a community that supports the practice of breastfeeding and help increase our local rates. Remember the old saying 'it takes a village to raise a child', let's provide all the support we can.

Breastfeeding Support Service

Our experienced midwives, including a qualified Lactation Consultant, are here to support you in your breastfeeding journey. Appointments are available during pregnancy as well as after birth, and we also have antenatal groups running each month. Phone, telehealth, centre based or home visit appointments are available.

Contact Community Health for an appointment on 5033 9337, or complete a self referral here: <https://www.shdh.org.au/referrals/>



BREASTFEEDING GROUP IS BACK FOR 2026

BREASTFEEDING. MIXED FEEDING. BOTTLE FEEDING.

When: Join us from 9:30-11:00 am, Thursday 12 February
Where: Child and Family Hub, 63 McCrae St, Swan Hill.

Connect with other parents and carers, share experiences, and get support for your infant feeding journey.

The local Breastfeeding Support Service will be there to answer your questions.



Early Years



INFANT Program

The INFANT program is designed to help families with healthy eating, active play and reduced screen time from the start of their baby's life.

Four group sessions for mums, dads and carers are led by our experienced Dietitian, Kerri, who has undertaken INFANT training through Deakin University.

Content is reinforced via a mobile app called **My Baby Now**. Each session runs for around 90 minutes and are delivered when infants are 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.

Parents can book into all four sessions at once, or each session individually by calling us at Community Health on 5033 9337 or emailing Kerri at kcurran@shdh.org.au

Key messages

Our team at Community Health are promoting two of the key messages from the INFANT program over the next few months, and have developed some resources to help families. These can be found on our website at shdh.org.au/children_services.

Eat together, play together



From birth, children watch and copy their parents. They learn about their world with you. Enjoy sharing mealtimes together and find time for active play with your child each day.

Off and running



Screens of any type are not recommended at all for children under 2 years of age. Children learn more from you and the world when screens are off. Encourage your child to be active every day and get active together.

For access to local information, events and services go to the Early Years Online Hub. Translations are also available on this site.

www.earlyyearsonlinehub.org.au.



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

What is your favourite summer fruit or veg?

- Freshly picked home grown tomatoes
- Local stone fruit like peaches, nectarines or plums.....

Growing your own fruit, vegetables and herbs is very rewarding, taste spectacular and saves money. We are lucky to live in an area of high quality food growers so try buying local produce, you will not be disappointed!



Healthy lunchbox week

Healthy lunchbox week, 9-15 February, provides timely information for families at the start of the school year. It is a time to provide practical and inspiring lunchbox ideas and recipes for children (and adults)! Supported by Nutrition Australia, a host of recipes and resources are available to download and print or add to school newsletters. Go to <https://www.lunchboxweek.org/> to access more.

We also provide a range of recipes and tips on our eatmovesmile blog <https://eatmovesmile.shdh.org.au/> and on the Food for All website <https://www.foodforall.community/>

Nutrition Australia have some great tips on tailoring lunchboxes for different children's needs. As we know everyone's tastes and preferences vary and navigating the feeding journey is unique, check out the fact sheet on [Tailoring Lunchboxes](#). It is important to use positive language about food, avoid labels like 'healthy/unhealthy' or 'good/bad' as these reduce food to moral judgements. Celebrate all foods for their role in providing energy and nourishment to our bodies. Using terms like Go foods (grains), Grow foods (protein sources such as dairy, meat and alternatives) and Glow foods (fruit and vegetables) can help. Encourage children to explore food using all their senses.

The basics for packing a lunchbox:

Get the children involved in preparing and packing their own lunchbox.

- sandwich, roll, wrap, salad (rice/pasta), rice paper roll
- whole or cut up fruit, vegetable sticks, canned fruit
- yogurt, dip and chip/crackers, popcorn, mini muffin, muesli bar
- water bottle, plain UHT milk



Remember use a ice brick or frozen water bottle to keep lunchbox cool.

Spread some lunchbox love with little notes to add to your child's lunchbox, see [here](#) for some printable examples, or just write a note and sneak it in!



eat fruit & veg move more often smile together



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