

SEPTEMBER 2026



NEWSLETTER

Community Health

Learn about our key healthy lifestyle messages and community services.

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Welcome to Spring!

September brings us Women's Health Week, RUOK? Day, Sexual Health Day along with Father's Day, and many reasons to foster connections and new beginnings. It is also the beginning of warmer weather, a time for being outdoors, maybe starting or refreshing your vegetable garden, learn more within. We also share information on current programs, new and upcoming events and our local services and teams.



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

Meet our team

The Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal has supported two programs at SHDH since September 2025, the Nurse Led Paediatric Clinic and the Paediatric Allied Health Clinical Lead.

Sharnee is our Paediatric Nurse who implements the Nurse Led Paediatric Clinic mentioned below, currently working 3 days per week at Community Health.

Sharnee has worked in metropolitan hospitals and in primary health care, she has experience with both children and adults. She previously worked in our team in Refugee Health.



Sharnee

Kerri is our Paediatric Allied Health Clinical Lead who has worked at SHDH for many years as a senior Dietitian and also a member of the Health Promotion team.

Kerri implements the INFANT program and attends playgroups and early learning centres and events to promote early years nutrition. Kerri also provides Dietetic consultations at Community Health in the out-patient clinic.



Kerri

Nurse Led Paediatric Clinic

The Good Friday Appeal funding has enabled the establishment of a nurse led paediatric telehealth clinic and a paediatric allied health lead clinician position, both roles working collaboratively.

The clinic is providing children within the community access to paediatricians in a relatively short time frame. Prior to this service, it was not uncommon to wait 12-18 months to get in to see a paediatrician. Even when they did, the families had to travel to Bendigo or Echuca (which is a minimum of 2 hours). Some of these referrals would be declined altogether.

Over the 10 months since commencement, the Clinic has completed 409 consultations to 123 new clients. The nurse will see the client and carer prior to booking a telehealth paediatrician appointment and collect relevant details, then attend the paediatrician telehealth appointment with the client and carer. The nurse will also provide appropriate follow up care.

Clients ranged from age of infant to teen, with an equal split of male to female, and majority from the Swan Hill region. Reason for attendance ranged from behavioural concerns, constipation, growth concerns, night terrors, endocrinology, cancer, vaccine reaction, anxiety and other reasons.

For more information see here: <https://www.shdh.org.au/our-services/paediatric-nurse-led-clinic/>



Mental Wellbeing



Thursday, 10 September 2026 is **R U OK?Day**.

Checking in with those around you is important every day. What people value most is trust, a sense of genuine care, and someone who really listens to them, without judgement.

Ask R U OK? Any Day because a conversation could change a life.

Research shows that 1 in 4 people may hesitate to ask even when they think someone is struggling. That's why we're reminding everyone that if someone's on your mind, trust your instinct and start a conversation.

Use these 4 steps to get started:

1. **Ask R U OK?** e.g. 'How are you travelling?', 'You don't seem yourself lately - want to talk about it?'
2. **Listen** - e.g. 'I'm here to listen if you want to talk more', 'Have you been feeling this way for a while?'
3. **Encourage Action** - e.g. 'What do you think is a first step that might help you?', 'Have you spoken to your doctor about this?'
4. **Check in** - e.g. 'Just wanted to check in and see how you're doing?', 'Have things improved for you since our last chat?'

Learn more at ruk.org.au



Events

AFFIRMATION STATION

in Swan Hill

October 16-17, 2026

Transgender Victoria has partnered with Swan Hill District Community Health and headspace Swan Hill to bring Affirmation Station to the local community.

Join us for two days of social activities, workshops, and gender affirmation services for trans, gender diverse, and non-binary folks age 16+.



PEER NAVIGATION



TRANS SOCIAL CLUB



VOICE THERAPY



SUPPORTING TRANS
FAMILY WORKSHOP



STYLING WORKSHOP



AFFIRMING PRODUCTS
WORKSHOP

All events require registration to attend. Location for events will be provided upon registration.

To register or to learn more about each of these events, scan the QR code or visit tgvt.org.au/events



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Women's Health Week



The theme this year for Women's Health Week is 'do it anyway' taking small steps towards your health.

We encourage you to explore different health topics each day. You can find practical information, expert advice and real stories designed to help women care for their health in ways that feel realistic and achievable. See here for more details:
<https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/get-involved/womens-health-week/>

To Fuel

Food is fuel. Let's get back to basics and look at realistic ways to choose simple food habits that can make a real difference to how you feel. Because when it comes to eating well, doing it anyway doesn't mean doing it perfectly. Remember chat to a Dietitian if you would like tailored nutrition advice to suit your health and lifestyle, to book go to
<https://www.shdh.org.au/referrals/>

To Move

Reframe what it means to be active. Exercise does not need to be intense, structured or time-consuming to make a difference. Regular movement that is built into everyday life has real and lasting benefits to your physical and mental health and your energy levels. Check out our local physical activity options [here](#): or go to Health Promotion at www.shdh.org.au

To Rest

Getting a good sleep is one of the most powerful things you can do for your health, and for many women, it is also one of the most difficult things to achieve. Rest however goes beyond sleep, it's the moments in a busy day where you give yourself permission to stop – lie down, switch off, step outside or simply not be productive. These moments matter. Rest is how your body repairs, resets and keeps going.

To Breathe

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical health. Hormonal changes, life stages, carrying more than your share – can be a lot to cope with. It can be hard to recognise when you're struggling, overwhelmed or feeling disconnected from yourself.

To Connect

The power of human connection cannot be overstated. Try some small steps to finding connection, call a friend you haven't spoken with for a while, join a community group or chat to a neighbour, work colleague or family member. Remember social connection has lasting impacts on our physical and mental health.

Local screening services for women's health

- **Breastscreen** – <https://bookings.breastscreen.org.au/>
- **Cervical Screening**
 - SHDH Community Health 5033 9337
 - Swan Hill Primary Health Medical Centre 5033 9900
 - Mallee District Aboriginal Health Service 5032 8600
- **Bowel Screening** – <https://www.cancer.org.au/bowelscreening>
- **Lung Screening** – see your GP if you are aged 50-70 years, currently smoke or have quit in the last 10 years and have a smoking history of 30 pack-years (1 pack-year is equal to 20 cigarettes (one pack) per day for one year)



Women's Health

Gender Equity

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence - Swan Hill 2026

This year, Swan Hill will proudly join Respect Mallee, created by a group of Mallee based organisations in Mildura, to take action to prevent violence against women and build communities where respect and safety are the norm. Throughout the 16 Days of Activism (25 November – 10 December), individuals, schools, businesses, organisations and staff are encouraged to take part. Every action, big or small, helps create homes, workplaces and community spaces where women and girls can live free from violence.

If you or your organisation or community group would like support to get involved, please contact Tara at tmirabito@shdh.org.au.

Save the Date: Swan Hill Walk Against Family Violence

Join the Swan Hill Walk Against Family Violence at 11am on Friday 27th November. The whole community is invited! Walk with your community, hear from local speakers and connect. The Walk Against Family Violence is a key event during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global initiative dedicated to preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. Wear orange if you can and bring a hat and drink bottle. More information and events to come!



Tara

WALK AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE SWAN HILL



FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 11 AM

**CAMPBELL STREET SWAN HILL
CNR. RUTHERFORD STREET TO CLOCK TOWER**

**RESPECT IS KNOWING YOU CAN
HELP PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Safe Steps 1800 015 188 | 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 | Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491
If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 000 and ask for the police.

1800RESPECT is the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service. If you or someone you know is experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family or sexual violence, you can call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732, text 0458 737 732 or visit their website for online chat and video call services – Available 24/7.

Breastfeeding



Father's Day: Every Moment Counts

This Father's Day, we're celebrating the important role fathers and father figures can play in giving children a healthy start.

Supporting breastfeeding is one way dads can make a difference. Breastfeeding can take time and energy, particularly in the early weeks. Simple things such as bringing baby to a feed, making sure mum has a drink or something to eat, helping with household jobs, and caring for older children can make breastfeeding feel more manageable.

And connection doesn't have to happen around feeding. Cuddles, skin-to-skin time, nappy changes, baths, singing, reading, talking and playing are all wonderful opportunities for dads and babies to get to know each other and build a strong relationship.

For young children, it's often the everyday moments that matter most. Playing together, listening, responding to their ideas and interests, sharing a book or simply being present helps children feel safe, valued and loved. Warm, responsive relationships are an important foundation for children's learning, development and wellbeing.

This Father's Day, remember: you don't need to do something big to make a difference. Sometimes the little moments are the big ones.

Happy Father's Day to all the dads, stepdads, grandfathers, uncles and father-figures who help children feel loved, supported and connected.

Key messages from



Earlier this year our team produced some resources for parents promoting two key messages from the INFANT program. Recently one of these messages has changed, from **'off and running'** to **'switch off to play and eat'**. The underlying rationale and research behind the message is the same. 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. These can be found on our website at shdh.org.au/children_services. The resources give parents tips and ideas to be active with your toddler. If you have an infant in their first year of life, join an INFANT program (call us on 5033 9337); meet other families, learn through shared experiences, access evidence-based resources and expert guides. INFANT consists of four face-to-face group sessions led by a professional with content reinforced via a mobile app called **My Baby Now**.

Switch Off to Play and Eat

10 ways to be active with your toddler

- Ball play – rolling, catching, hitting, bouncing, kicking
- Dancing together
- Chase bubbles
- Walk, run or skip along chalk lines
- Play guess the animal game – run like a monkey, flap like a bird
- Take a nature walk together
- Try a rough and tumble play game
- Play hide and seek
- Balance games like trying to stand on one leg
- Jumping or laughing games



Spring



Why bother growing your own food?

There are many benefits to growing your own edible garden including:

- **being active** – gardening can be quite a workout, from digging, planting, weeding, watering, and for many of us is exercise for a purpose,
- **improved mental wellbeing** – gardening either on your own or with others is great for your mental health, fresh air and sunshine brings a sense of wellbeing, and gardening may foster some new connections
- **increased variety of foods in your diet** – it may be growing new fruits, vegetables or herbs, or just your usual favourites but the benefits of home-grown seasonal produce cannot be underestimated. They contain higher levels of nutrients than store bought items and will have enhanced flavour,
- **cost benefits** – growing your own food can save you money, especially growing foods from seeds. Did you know we have a seed library at the Swan Hill Regional Library? Seeds can also be saved for some vegetables and herbs and grown again the following season. Chat to others, you may meet people who are happy to share produce, seeds or seedlings.

Gardening tips

Our **Food For All - Swan Hill Region** website holds many resources for gardeners, including a 'When to Plant Guide' and 'Edible Garden - Starter Kit'.

Check them out here: <https://www.foodforall.community/resources>

School Holiday Fun!

School holiday activities at the **Swan Hill Regional Library** run from **21 September – 2 October 2026**, with a full program of free, family-friendly events available to view on the **Early Years Online Hub - Local Events** page or Library's Facebook page. To book, Direct Message the library or call 5036 2480.

From stories and craft to active play and creative workshops, there's something for every child. See below the very special activities supported by our Health Promotion Team!

Dad's-Do-Hair – Twilight Tales Special Event

Wednesday 23 Sept | 7:00-8:30pm FREE | Suitable for children of all ages
Calling all dads!

Join us for a special Twilight Tales. We'll read Daddy Do My Hair by Tola Okogwu, before learning some handy hairdressing tips and tricks. A professional hairdresser will be at the library to show dads how to tackle their children's hair. From brushing and plaiting to creating simple styles they can try at home, no child will ever have a bad hair day again. And that's not all! Children will also enjoy a FREE goody bag filled with fun hair accessories, thanks to Swan Hill Health Promotions. Come along, have some fun and leave ready to conquer those tricky hair days! Bookings required.



Kids Create: Baked Potatoes

Tuesday 29 Sept | 10:30-11:30am FREE | Suitable for children 3-5 years

Join us for a fun, hands-on session with Bronte from Swan Hill District Health! We'll start with a delightful story before diving into creating your own yummy and healthy baked potatoes. A perfect mix of creativity, food, and fun for kids! Limited places. Bookings required.



Sexual Health

Sexual health is an important part of our overall health and wellbeing. Everyone deserves access to respectful, inclusive and confidential sexual and reproductive health care, information and support.

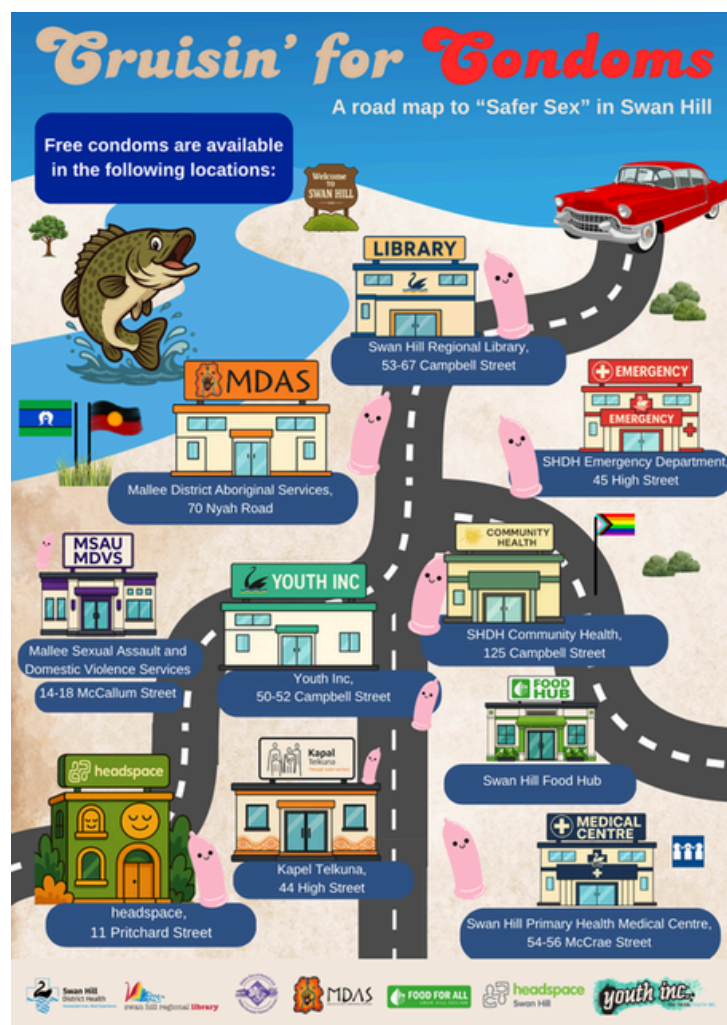
Our Community Health team can provide support and information through our Sexual & Reproductive Health Nurse Practitioner, including advice, health checks, contraception, STI information and referrals.

♥ If you have questions about your sexual or reproductive health, you're welcome to reach out.

Contact Community Health 5033 9337 for more information or to find out how we can support you.

Our bodies are ours to know, to explore and to enjoy fully. Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life – in what we think, imagine and desire, in what we believe and value, in pleasure, intimacy and connection, and in every body.

Every Body is World Sexual Health Day 2026 theme, a declaration that Sexual Health, Rights, Justice and Pleasure belong to every person, in every body, without exception.



Cruisin' for Condoms

Can you spot any new Locations on our **Cruisin' For Condoms** Road Map?

Yes that's right, you can now get FREE condoms from MDVSAU & also KTU...

also a reminder when getting support from the Food Hub you can ask for condoms to be included in your order.



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