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## What is SWANzine?

The SWANzine newsletter is a guide to health, legal, social, employment, and community information for women engaged in indoor sex work in the Lower Mainland. English and Chinese versions are available.



If there is a topic you would like to see in SWANzine, please let us know!



## Announcements SWAN Modernizes and Expands

**New Website!!** Check out our new fresh look just in time for Spring at [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca) (Chinese pages are under construction. Check back in April).

**New Staff!!** SWAN has a new Mandarin/English speaking staff person. Irene will provide Netreach (technology-based outreach using the internet, text message, social media, etc.) to women engaged in independent, indoor sex work. Irene can be reached at [netreach@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:netreach@swanvancouver.ca) or at **778 865 6343**. SWAN would like to thank the City of Vancouver for proving funding for this 16 hours/week, 2 year position.

**New Volunteers!!** SWAN welcomed four new volunteers in February. All four women come to SWAN with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Keep an eye out for our new volunteers during outreach and say hi.

**Facebook Page!!** [www.facebook.com/SwanVancouver](http://www.facebook.com/SwanVancouver) Find community events and workshops, work-related safety tips, legal information and so much more. To protect your privacy, you can visit our page without 'liking us'. If you are not a Facebook user, you can still view our page.

## Work-Related Announcements

**Free condoms and lube!!** SWAN outreach volunteers distribute free condoms and lube once a month. If you miss their visit, call 604 719 6343 for supplies; it may take 2-4 days for us to drop them off so please plan ahead.

**Durex lubricated condoms** Unfortunately, our supplier no longer has Durex lubricated condoms in blue packaging. We realize these are the preferred choice of many women and are passing on your requests (and complaints) to our supplier! For the foreseeable future, SWAN will only have Lifestyles condoms. We apologize for any inconvenience this causes.

**Nurse visits** If you would like a nurse to come to your workplace, please call or email SWAN with three dates and times you are available and we can schedule an appointment with a nurse. If you would like to contact an outreach nurse directly, please call 604 707 2790. Note: We arrange nurse visits with our community partner (BCCDC). SWAN does not have nurses on staff. We may be able to accompany the nurse to provide support or translation.

**Taxes** Not sure if/how you should file taxes? See tax return information for sex workers at [www.spoc.ca/resources.html](http://www.spoc.ca/resources.html)

email: [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) | web: [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)

outreach phone: 604-719-6343



## Getting Connected



### Spotlight on Community Health Service

#### BC Women's Nurse Practitioners at Vancouver Women's Health Collective

SWAN talked to Nurse Practitioner Lenore Riddell about health services at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC).

#### What is a nurse practitioner and what health services do you provide at VWHC?

Nurse practitioners provide basic primary health care services that include: the diagnosis and treatment of common health problems; prescribing most medications (not narcotics); ordering tests and x-rays; referrals to other healthcare providers including physician specialists.

#### Does a woman have to make an appointment or is there a drop-in clinic?

There are both. Tuesday-Friday we have two nurse practitioners on usually with one being booked and the other available for drop-in. We will always see a drop-in if the nurse practitioner is free.

#### How long does it take to get an appointment?

Usually within a day unless a woman wants to see one nurse practitioner in particular.

#### Does a woman need a BC health card and/or other identification to be seen at the clinic? Does a woman need to use her real name?

No, we can see undocumented women and women who use aliases. However, if a woman needs tests, then she either has to pay the lab or give us her PHN number. STI tests are an exception to this - no documentation is required.

**Are test results shared with the woman's family doctor?** No, only if the woman requests the results shared.

**Do women have to be residents of Vancouver to be seen at the clinic?** No.

**If a woman says she is a sex worker, what do you do with that information? Can a woman ask not to have that information recorded in her chart?** I wouldn't put that information in a chart unless a woman is ok with it.

#### Is there anything else you would like women know about your services?

Nurses have a long history of working with women who have multiple barriers to health care. We are non-judgmental and will provide the best care we can. Also, the space is for anyone who self-identifies as a woman.

**To book an appointment,** call 604 875 3290. The bright, cheery and welcoming clinic is located at 29 West Hastings St. Vancouver. Hours: Monday - Thursday 1:30pm - 4:30pm/Fridays 10am - 1pm. SWAN may be able to provide translation and/or accompaniment to your first visit.

### HEALTH CLINICS

#### VANCOUVER

**BCCDC Clinics** 655 West 12th  
604-707-5600 or Drop-in Clinic  
1170 Bute St. 11am-6:30pm Mon-  
Fri. All ages. Offers: \*STI & HIV  
Testing \*Birth Control \*Hepatitis  
B Vaccine. Free and confidential.  
No MSP required.  
[www.bccdc.ca/dis-cond/az/\\_s/SexuallyTransmittedInfections/clinprog/default.htm](http://www.bccdc.ca/dis-cond/az/_s/SexuallyTransmittedInfections/clinprog/default.htm)

#### VCH South Vancouver

**Community Health Centre** 6405  
Knight Street 604.321.6151  
\*STI & HIV Testing \*Birth  
Control \*Mandarin and Cantonese  
doctors available. Drop in  
Monday-Friday 3pm-4pm. We  
suggest asking for Nurse  
Practitioner Jennifer for the pap  
clinic 2nd Wednesday of every  
month 3pm to 6pm and 3rd  
Wednesday of every month from  
1:30pm to 4pm.  
[http://www.vch.ca/403/7676/?program\\_id=1414](http://www.vch.ca/403/7676/?program_id=1414)

#### BURNABY

**Options for Sexual Health Clinic**  
4734 Imperial 604-731-4252  
[www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers/opt-metrotown-formerly-new-westminster](http://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers/opt-metrotown-formerly-new-westminster)  
All ages. Offers: \*Birth control  
\*Pregnancy testing and options \*  
STI & HIV testing. Wednesdays  
7pm-9pm

**Youth Clinic** 4734 Imperial 604-  
293-1764. 21 and under.  
[www.fraserhealth.ca/find\\_us/services/?program\\_id=9998](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/find_us/services/?program_id=9998) \*STI  
testing, treatment and counseling  
\*HIV counseling, testing and  
referral \*Pregnancy testing  
\*Emergency contraception.  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 1pm  
- 5pm.

#### RICHMOND

**Youth Clinic** 8100 Granville 604-  
233-3204. 21 and under. \* STI &  
HIV testing \*Birth control\*  
Morning after pill free for all  
ages. Mondays 3:30 p.m. - 5:30  
p.m. /Wednesdays 3:30 p.m. -  
5:30 p.m./ Fridays 1 p.m. - 4p.m.

For clinics in **other municipalities**, check SWAN's website (health).

## Your Health and the 'BBBJ' (bareback blow job)



### HEALTH

Do you have health questions? Is there health information you would like to see in SWANzine? Please let us know. Email your question to [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) or ask SWAN outreach



When performing a BBBJ, there are a number of health risks you should be aware of. Giving (and receiving) oral sex is one way that sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be transmitted from one person to another. Oral sex is lower risk than genital or anal sex when it comes to STIs but there is still the possibility of STI transmission. When giving a BBBJ, you will be at risk for STIs that are transmitted by skin-to-skin and fluid contact.

The most common infections that can pass to the throat are gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia. STIs like gonorrhea and chlamydia live at the end of the urethra (pee tube). They can be transmitted from the penis to the throat without ejaculation (cumming). STI like herpes, syphilis and genital warts (HPV) are passed from skin-to-skin contact so these can be transmitted from penis to mouth regardless if the client ejaculates or not.

To reduce the possibility of skin-to-skin transmission, look carefully for any open sores, bumps, or rashes on the entire genital area, particularly the penis, but including the scrotum and pubic mound. It would be best to avoid contact if you see anything like this. Transmission is more likely with symptoms present but there is some possibility of transmission even with no symptoms present.

You can reduce the possibility of fluid-transmitted STIs by limiting your contact with bodily fluids, in this case ejaculate and pre-ejaculate.

Avoiding taking ejaculate in your mouth will reduce risk. You can reduce contact with pre-ejaculate by not taking the head of the penis into your mouth, instead you can orally stimulate along the shaft of the penis instead of the head (imagine you are eating corn on the cob, only substitute licking and sucking for biting!). If you do take the head of the penis into your mouth, it would be safer to not deep throat as the back of your throat is a vulnerable and delicate area.

It is much safer to refrain from BBBJs if you had any sores or cuts on your mouth or if you've recently had dental work done. In addition, refrain from brushing your teeth or flossing two hours before or after oral sex, as this can create tiny cuts in the mouth.

And lastly, taking good care of your oral health, which includes regular brushing and flossing (outside of the two-hour window mentioned above).

Keeping your mouth as healthy as possible will leave your body better equipped to ward off infection.

Using a condom when performing oral sex will help prevent the transmission of STIs and help protect yourself!



Sources:

Options for Sexual Sex Sense [www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/1-800-SEX-SENSE/](http://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/1-800-SEX-SENSE/) 604-731-7803 or submit question anonymously online

BCCDC/Smart Sex Resource [www.smartsexresource.com/chat](http://www.smartsexresource.com/chat) anonymously with a nurse online

Thanks to Family Nurse Practitioner **Jennifer Beaveridge** at the South Vancouver Community Health Centre for providing support and medical expertise.

The Law and You

On December 20, 2013 the Supreme Court of Canada in Bedford v. Canada struck down Canada's sex work laws declaring them unconstitutional. Sex work has always been legal in Canada; the Supreme Court of Canada decision has not changed this. However, many of the actions associated with sex work are illegal, making it very difficult to do sex work without breaking the law. The laws that were struck down are

- communicating for the purpose of prostitution
• living on the avails
• keeping a common bawdy house

These actions remain illegal for the next year during which time the federal government has time to create a new legal framework.

Canada's sex work laws are determined at the federal level. Laws in regard to business licensing (hours, locks on doors, etc.) are determined at the municipal level and have not been affected by the Supreme Court decision. If you have any questions about the difference between federal and municipal laws or have questions about the Supreme Court decision, please contact SWAN.

Over the next year, there will be a number of community events and opportunities to have your voice heard. If you are a worker, manager or owner and would like to prevent new criminalization of your work, please contact SWAN for information on how to get involved or connect with others with similar goals. Check our website and Facebook page regularly for the most current information on sex work laws and the changes that may affect your work.



SWAN: Who We Are

SWAN is a community-based, non-profit organization. SWAN works to make indoor sex work safer.

- We provide support, outreach and advocacy to women engaged in indoor sex work
•We help women answer questions about the law, health, employment, immigration, legal and social issues
•We provide safer sex supplies (FREE)
•We connect women to respectful health services

Who we are not: We are not nurses (although we can connect you to one). We are not government employees. We are not police or immigration officials.



Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN)
outreach phone: 604-719-6343
email: info@swanvancouver.ca | web: www.swanvancouver.ca
mail: PO 21520 - 1424 Commercial Drive Vancouver V5L1G2

Free Legal Advice

Pivot Legal Clinics

Atira Women's Resource Society
101 East Cordova
By appointment only.
(604) 331-1407
For women only

Lifeskills Centre
412 East Cordova
First come, first serve.
Men and women welcome.
Go to

www.pivotlegal.org/legal\_help for dates and times.

Jane Doe Legal Network

If you are a woman who has experienced violence and need legal help, the Jane Doe Legal Network may be able to provide you with confidential legal advice. Contact Darcie@pivotlegal.org



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Free Family Law Legal Advice

Lawyers with Family law expertise will attend workshops. Women may bring forms or relevant paperwork Thursdays, 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm, May-July at Battered Women's Support Services. For more information, http://www.bwss.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BWSS-Legal-Advocacy-poster-2014\_F.pdf

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THANK YOU!