

# SWANzine



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**SWAN: Who We Are**

Since 2002 we have been providing free safer sex supplies; connecting women to respectful health care providers; and providing referrals, information and answers to your health, social, employment, immigration and legal questions. We publish this newsletter three times a year. Our services are free. Our work is funded by the City of Vancouver. We are not nurses (although we can connect you to one). We are not government employees.

We are not police or immigration officials. Any information you share with us is confidential.



**New Facebook page!!!** [www.facebook.com/SwanVancouver](http://www.facebook.com/SwanVancouver)  
Find work-related safety tips, community events, bulletins about high risk offenders in the community, reports about neighbourhood assaults and other useful information.

At SWAN, we take your privacy very seriously. If you "like" our Facebook page but do not comment or like any of our posts, no one can see you; another option is just to visit our page regularly without "liking us".



**Volunteer at SWAN!** Would you like to use your knowledge and work experience to support other women? Would you like to do outreach? Do you have an idea or a project that would increase the health, safety and well-being of other women? Maybe you have other strengths and skills to offer (e.g. translation, website design, etc.)! SWAN is looking for new volunteers. We will do a volunteer training in January 2014. The training will be in English. Contact us at 604 719 6343 or [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) for more information.

SWAN respects your privacy and it is not necessary to identify as currently or formerly engaged in sex work to volunteer with us. Sharing information about your personal or professional life is a decision we leave up to you.

**Got Questions?** Check the 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) section on our website ([www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)). We answer questions on the law, health, safety, money matters and filing taxes, and many other topics. If there is a question you would like answered and posted in the FAQ webpage, please send your questions to [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca)



**Free condoms and lube!** If you miss the outreach team when they visit and call for supplies to be dropped off, it may 2-4 days. However, you can visit our office to pick up supplies the same day. Call 604 719 6343 for address.

**outreach phone: 604-719-6343**



**email: [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) | web: [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca)  
mail: PO 21520 - 1424 Commercial Drive Vancouver V5L1G2**

## Safety

### Negotiating Payment

Ever had a customer who didn't pay or demanded money back after receiving a service? Here are some tips to avoid non-payment and to deal with the customer who demands a refund. To avoid non-payment, you could try these tips.

- Decide in advance the services you are willing and not willing to provide and what your prices are.
- Get the money up front, every time, no exceptions!!! Just because a customer seems nice, is known to you, or only pays for the first hour or one service is not reason to not collect **all** the money up front.
- When you get the money, put it away immediately in a safe place.
- Talk to other workers about how much clients are usually charged for particular services and their tips on avoiding customers who try to refuse payment.
- Consider putting a "NO REFUNDS" sign at reception, in the window or in the room.

If a customer demands a refund, you could try the following.

- Stay calm – try to calm the person and talk them out of it. Speak in a low, quiet tone and try not to raise your voice or shout.
- If you work with others, ask for support from a receptionist, co-worker, manager or owner to help manage the situation.
- Make a decision as to whether it is worth the argument, fight and/or risk to keep the money.
- If things escalate, think about how you will safely remove yourself from the situation.
- Keep a detailed 'bad customers' list so you and anyone you work with can make an informed decision whether or not to see particular customers in the future.

For other tips on dealing with difficult customers, check out

<http://www.respectqld.org.au/flyers-and-photos/dealing-with-difficult-clients>

**What do you do if customers refuse to pay? Send your tips to [info@swanvancouver.ca](mailto:info@swanvancouver.ca) or 604 719 6343 and we'll pass on these tips to other workers. You do not need to identify yourself or where you work to pass your tips along.**

Sources: We Got This! Volume One: screening Safe Calls, Screening and Buddy Systems for Sex Workers

<http://bornwhore.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/we-got-this-final-1.pdf>

Keeping Safe Safety Advice for Sex Workers in the UK. <http://www.uknswp.org/wp-content/uploads/RSW2.pdf>

### Police Visits When the Manager Is Not In

What should you do?

You may decide to give your name and your age to show that you are cooperative. Other than providing that your name and address, you have the right to remain silent and should tell the police you do not want to answer any more questions.

The police may ask for permission to search you and your personal belongings. You have the right to say no. Tell the officer you **DO NOT CONSENT** to be searched and you **DO NOT CONSENT** to a search of your personal belongings. Be aware that they may search you anyways. Even if you think you are being illegally searched, do not physically resist but tell them you **DO NOT CONSENT**.

Do not consent to having your picture taken. According to the law, police **MUST** obtain permission before taking a photo. If this has ever been an issue, consider putting a "NO PHOTOGRAPHS" sign at reception, in the window or in the room. Also please let SWAN know.

It is good practice to ask a police officer for his/her business card during every visit. That way if you have a question about the visit or want to make a complaint, having the officer's details will be very helpful. There is no reason why an officer should not be able to meet the simple request of providing a business card.

If you feel your rights are being violated and you feel comfortable doing so, read out or hand SWAN's Legal Rights Card to the officer. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, read the card in advance to familiarize yourself with your rights. The pocket card is available on our website (see News & Events page) or ask one of our outreach members.

## Work-Related Stress

### Tired? Feeling burnt out?



Do you feel you are working too much? Do you feel as though you simply can't face another client? If so, you could be experiencing burnout. Check out these tips on how to deal with burn out.

<http://www.respectqld.org.au/information/factsheets-1>



All website links in this newsletter can be copied from SWANzine found online at [www.swanvancouver.ca/information-and-advice/swanzine-newletter](http://www.swanvancouver.ca/information-and-advice/swanzine-newletter)

## Health Services

### HealthLink BC

Do you have questions about your health or medications? Call 8-1-1. 8-1-1 is a free call from anywhere in BC. Nurses are available 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to provide non-emergency health information and advice in British Columbia. Translation services are available in over 130 languages.

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## Employment Services

### Skills Connect for Immigrants Program

You arrived in Canada with your dreams, skills and experience. But have you arrived at the job or career you are qualified for? Skills Connect helps **immigrants who do not require completely new credentials or extensive language upgrading** to quickly secure employment in areas relevant to their skills and experience.

#### Eligibility

Eligible program participants must have permanent resident status in Canada. It is preferred that you also meet the following criteria:

- Have arrived in Canada within the last 5 years
- Have at least intermediate English language skills
- Are either unemployed and not receiving provincial or federal assistance, or are under employed and not working at a level that utilizes their pre-arrival skills, experience and knowledge.

Financial support is also available for skill upgrading activities such as course fees, membership fees, licensing fees, and certification fees!!!

You will work one to one with an employment counselor who will help you with:

- Assessment and Individual Action Planning (assess your English, academic qualifications, technical skills and financial means)
- Skill Enhancement Services (info about upgrading courses, BC Certification)
- Workplace Orientation and Practice Services (pre-employment and job search support, resume writing)

For more information, go to [www.skillsconnect.ca/seeking-employment](http://www.skillsconnect.ca/seeking-employment)  
Tel: 604.575.3800/Toll-free: 1.877.277.4832/info@skillsconnect.ca

**If this employment program does not meet your needs and/or you are not an immigrant, Work BC Employment Centers (<http://www.workbc.ca/Pages/Home.aspx>) and Job Options BC ([http://www.jti.gov.bc.ca/job\\_options\\_bc/](http://www.jti.gov.bc.ca/job_options_bc/)) are other employment services options.**

## Yeast Infections

**What is a vaginal yeast infection?** Yeast infections are caused by the overgrowth of certain yeast that normally lives in the vagina. This overgrowth can be caused by many factors including: taking antibiotics or corticosteroids, taking birth control pills, pregnancy or poorly controlled diabetes. Yeast infections are not usually transmitted during sex.

**What are the symptoms?** In women, the vagina may become very itchy and sore. Sometimes a cottage cheese-like discharge will appear. The vagina may become red and dry, which could make sexual intercourse painful. In men, there are generally no symptoms, but a rash may appear on the penis.

**How is a vaginal yeast infection treated?** Treatment options include pills or creams, and ointments or tablets that are inserted into the vagina. Some treatments require a prescription and others can be bought off the shelf at the pharmacy (e.g. Monistat, Canesten, among others).

Some vaginal creams are used only at bedtime, because they can be messy and leak out of the vagina during the day. Some of these creams may come with a topical vaginal cream designed to be applied to the opening of the vagina and surrounding tissue and used externally, rather than inserted into the vagina. The topical cream may help relieve itching while the antifungal cream treats the yeast infection. If you use a vaginal cream to treat a yeast infection, you may want to abstain from sex if you're using condoms or a diaphragm for birth control. These oil-based creams can damage the latex in a condom or diaphragm.

Some medications are in tablet form that you can insert into the vagina and let dissolve. One benefit of a tablet is that it's less messy than a vaginal cream and less apt to ooze out during the day. Another benefit of tablets is that the doses are typically stronger and used for fewer days, so symptoms are relieved sooner.

### Is it ok to treat a yeast infection yourself?

- Be sure you actually do have a yeast infection before you start treatment. As many as two-thirds of women who treat themselves with over the counter products actually don't have a yeast infection but another kind of vaginal infection. See your doctor if you're not absolutely sure you have a yeast infection, because using the wrong medicine can make a yeast infection harder to treat -- and can prolong the problem if it's not a yeast infection.
- Be sure to follow the package directions exactly on how often to use any yeast infection treatment and how much of the product to use, because the dosage is designed to work with the growth cycle of the yeast. Call your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about treatment. You can also call 811 (see 811 HealthLink info on page 3 - 24/7, translators available).
- Antifungal medications can interact with a number of drugs. Be sure to talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking an antifungal if you are taking other medications.
- No matter which yeast infection treatment you try, see your doctor if your symptoms don't disappear after taking the full course of medication. Frequent, repeat yeast infections can be a sign of a more serious condition.

Sources: Health Link BC <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile08j.stm>

Web MD <http://women.webmd.com/yeast-infection-treatments-over-the-counter-vaginal-creams>

## HEALTH CLINICS VANCOUVER

**Women's Health Collective BC**  
Women's Nurse Practitioners 29  
West Hastings 604-736-5262  
[www.womenshealthcollective.ca](http://www.womenshealthcollective.ca)  
All ages. Women only. Trans  
women welcome.\*Check-ups  
\*Diagnosis and prescriptions  
\*Specialist referrals \*Birth control  
\*Pap tests \* STI & HIV testing.  
Monday - Thursday 1:30pm -  
4:30pm/Fridays 10am - 1pm Free  
services. Will not share results  
with family doctor if requested.

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

## 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/serv  
ices/?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 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

## 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.