



# RhED

## Taking Care of Your Sexual Health at Work

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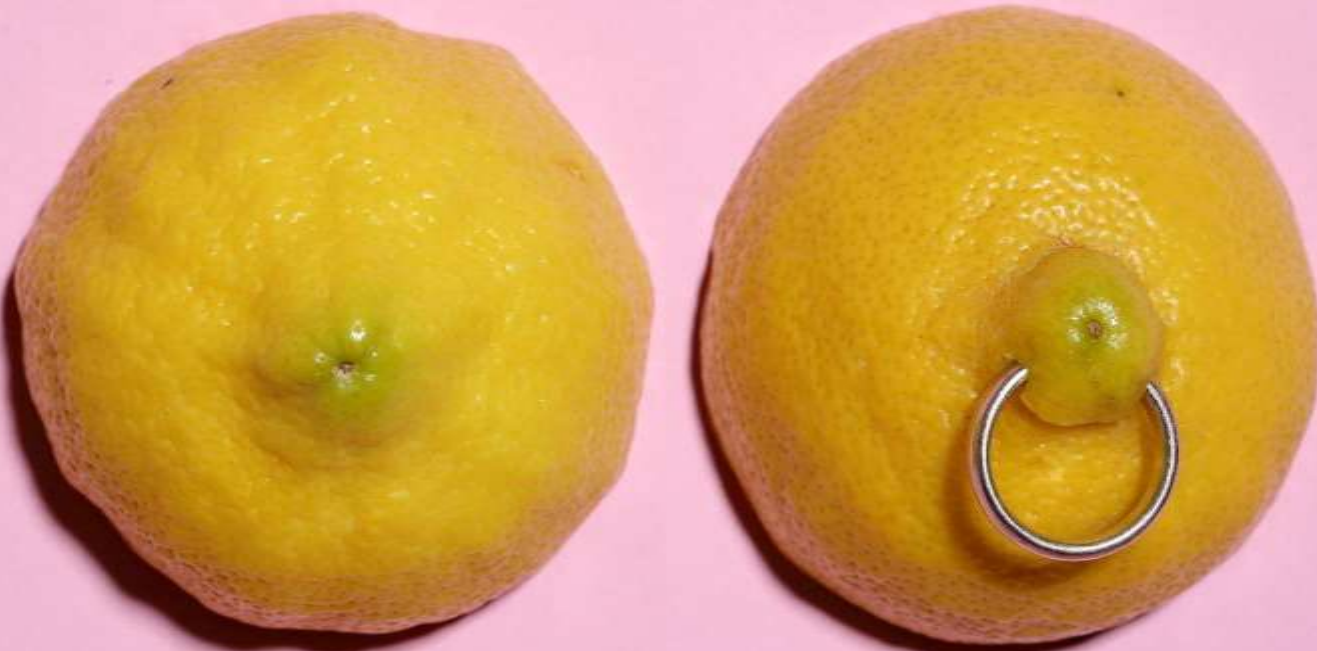


RhED acknowledges the traditional owners of this land, the Yaluk-ut Weelum clan of the Boon Wurrung people and the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation and the and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

# Taking care of your health at work

- This presentation is for people who work in the sex industry.
- Some of the slides contain graphic images of genitals with STI symptoms – this is to help you identify them during a health check.
- Doing a proper health check is an important part of the booking as it reduces your risk of contracting an STI, and as sex workers we need healthy bodies to keep working!
- The health check is also an opportunity to educate your clients about their sexual health and encourage them to have regular STI screening.
- If you would like more information on sexual health after you have checked out these slides or would like an online or in-person presentation, please contact one of our Health Educators at RhED 1800 458 758 or email [sexworker@sexworker.org.au](mailto:sexworker@sexworker.org.au)





**Did you know** research shows that sex workers have lower rates of STIs than the general population?

*Chow, E. P., Fehler, G., Chen, M. Y., Bradshaw, C. S., Denham, I., Law, M. G., & Fairley, C. K. (2014). Testing commercial sex workers for sexually transmitted infections in Victoria, Australia: an evaluation of the impact of reducing the frequency of testing. PloS one, 9(7), e103081. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0103081>*



# STI screening for sex workers

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- Brothel/Escort agency workers in Victoria are required to have STI screening every three months and to provide their manager with an up-to-date 'Certificate of Attendance' to work
- You can ask your doctor for a certificate with **just your working name on it**
- STI screening usually covers
  - Genital swabs for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomoniasis
  - Bloods for HIV and Syphilis
- Many doctors don't routinely do throat swabs but you can prompt them to – STIs like gonorrhea can be transmitted orally
- **Your results will not be on the certificate and you are not required to share them with anyone**
- Independent workers are not required to hold certificates, however, regular STI screening is recommended for anyone who is sexually active

# Safer sex supplies

- Condom packaging comes in different colours and sizes to reflect condom size (46 mm to 64 mm ) and different flavours
- Internal condoms – find out more here: [Internal Condom Animation #1 \(English\) + Internal Condom Chinese Animation #3 \(Chinese\)](#)
- Dams – used for oral contact, e.g. mouth to vulva or anus
- Gloves – useful for spills and condom breakages
- Sponges – soft tampons for working when menstruating





# Lubricant

- Using lubricant is imperative in sex work and it is important to know the right kind to use
- Water-based lubricant should be used as oil-based lubes can cause condom breakages
- Use the one that feels right for you
- You may want to try a few different brands
- For further info on lubricants visit :  
<https://nikkidarling.com.au/pages/lubricants-guide>

# The Health Check

- Before the client showers or goes to the toilet, conduct a health check
- You will need good lighting to do this properly, use your phone torch if you don't have bright light in the room
- Look in the whole pubic area, through the hair, along the base, shaft and tip of the penis or along the outer and inner lips of the vulva
- Check under the balls and around at the anus.
- If you suspect the client has symptoms of an STI, you have the option to refuse the service or offer a different service
- Here is an [in-depth description](#) of how to conduct a health check, by SWOP
- Remember you can always ask a colleague or manager for a second opinion





# What if a condom breaks or comes off?



- Remain calm and professional
- Stop the service immediately
- Withdraw the penis, holding the condom on at the base if present
- Urinate
- Squat and bear down (coughing can help you understand what this feels like), this will hopefully push out the condom or any pieces remaining and the ejaculate (cum)
- If the condom is still inside you, use a glove to get it out, be gentle as any friction or tears will increase risk of STI transmission
- Do not douche – trying to flush out the vagina may push the condom or ejaculate further into your body
- Get an STI screening for safety, consider if you need emergency contraception ('morning after' pill)
- Check out this extensive [resource from Respect Qld](#) for more info



# Sexually Transmissible Infections

- The following slides are a combination of images followed by symptoms, treatment and prevention
- These images will help you identify the symptoms of an STI so that you can decline a booking or offer an alternative service
- For more detailed information on STIs you can check out [Melbourne Sexual Health Centre's Fact Sheets](#)



# Genital Warts and Herpes

Genital warts and herpes are highly contagious viruses that are transmitted by skin-to-skin contact

- Condoms reduce transmission but not by 100% because:
  - the virus might be shedding but not showing symptoms and
  - because symptoms may be in an area that is not covered by the condom
- Shedding cannot be detected as it is an invisible process
- 80% of warts infections will resolve within 1-2 years
- Genital herpes, like oral herpes, is a lifelong infection, some people have many recurrences, some people have none and only carry the virus



# Identifying genital warts

There are different types of warts – some have a ‘cauliflower’ texture, some are flat, others are like raised moles

Remember to check both the genitals and anal area thoroughly

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell the difference between a wart and a mole or skin tag

Mayo Clinic recommends swabbing the wart with vinegar, if it is a true wart, it will turn white. So a tiny bottle of vinegar and some cotton buds might be a useful addition to your work bag!



# Genital Warts

## Symptoms

- Lumps, varying in size and shape ranging from cauliflower to flat
- The incubation period for genital warts is on average 2-3 months but may be longer

## Treatment

- Warts can be treated by a number of methods ranging from painting, freezing and laser
- However, the virus stays with you & the warts may recur

## Prevention

- Health check your clients,
- Use condoms and dental dams
- Avoid direct skin-to-skin contact with someone who is showing symptoms





# Identifying genital herpes

Active herpes lesions



Healing herpes lesion



# Genital Herpes

## Symptoms

- Itching or 'tingling' sensation in the pubic area
- Blisters or pimple like sores
- First lesion usually occurs within two weeks but can occur months or even years later

## Treatment

- Antiviral medication

## Prevention

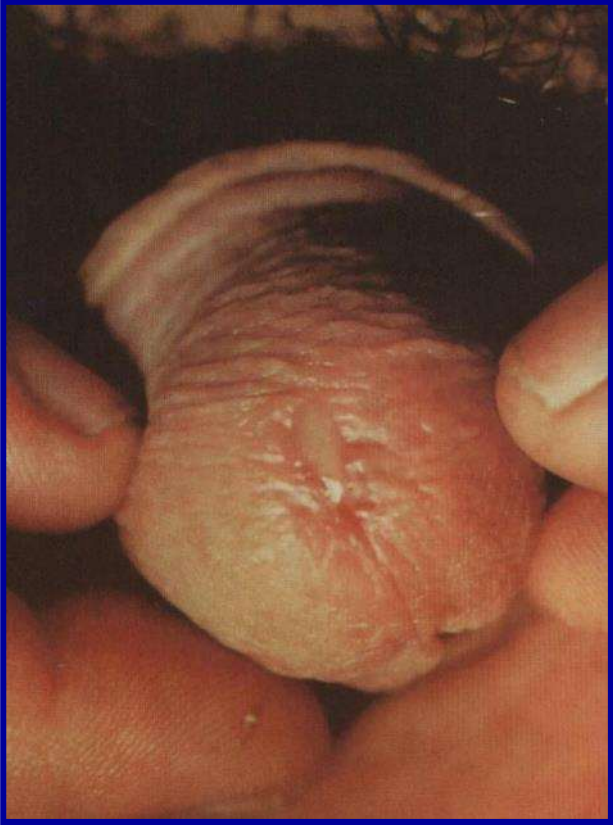
- Proper use of condoms
- Always thoroughly check your clients

## Note

- HSV 1 and 2 (oral and genital herpes) are contagious, are a lifelong infection and can be transmissible without symptoms



# Identifying chlamydia



White, cloudy or yellow discharge  
with strong odour



Redness or swelling at head of  
penis and urethra

# Chlamydia

## Symptoms

- Usually **no symptoms**
- May have pain or stinging when urinating
- Discharge or bleeding after sex from the penis, anus or vagina
- Sometimes affects the eyes & the throat
- Symptoms mainly occur 2-14 days of infection but may occur after as long as 21 days

## Treatment

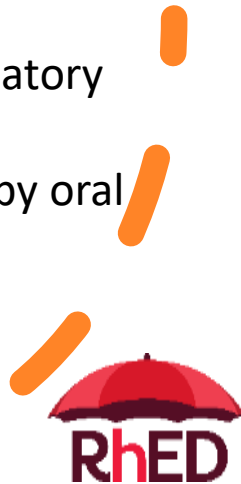
- Chlamydia can be treated with one-dose antibiotics

## Prevention

- Using a condom and/or dental dam will reduce the risk of infection

## Note

- If left undiagnosed it can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy or infertility
- Chlamydia is a bacterial infection transmitted by oral and penetrative sex without a condom
- You can get your throat swabbed when attending for STI testing



# Identifying gonorrhoea

A good way to tell if a client has gonorrhoea is to 'milk the penis'

- Gently squeeze the penis along the shaft. If a thick discharge appears this is a fairly good indication that it may be gonorrhoea
- It is important to do this before the client showers



White or yellowish discharge from the penis



# Gonorrhoea

## Symptoms

- May have no symptoms
- Pain or stinging when urinating
- Increased vaginal discharge or yellow/greenish discharge from the penis
- May also be found in the throat and eyes
- Symptoms appear 2-10 days after infection

## Treatment

- Usually a one-time injection of antibiotic into the buttock and one oral dose of a different antibiotic

## Prevention

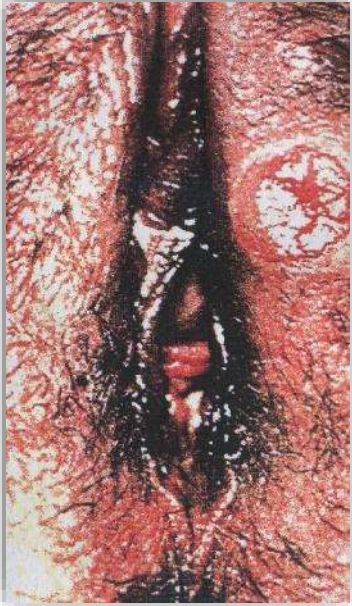
- Using a condom and/or dental dam will reduce the risk of infection

## Note

- Gonorrhoea is a bacterial infection passed on by penetrative and oral sex
- Consider asking to have your throat swabbed when attending for STI screening
- If left untreated it can cause pelvic infection also known as Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy or infertility



# Identifying syphilis



First stage symptoms: infectious chancre/sore on genitals, anus or mouth



Second stage symptoms: rash, usually starts on lower back

# Syphilis

## Symptoms

- First stage - ulcer type sores (chancres) anywhere on the body (genitals, mouth, under arm)
- Second stage - a rash covering the body (palms and soles of feet)
- Third stage – can cause brain, heart, & nervous system to stop working properly and paralysis

## Treatment

- Usually antibiotic by injection

## Prevention

- Using a condom and/or dental dam will reduce the risk of infection
- Look out for the visible signs of genital ulcers or sores and if you are concerned speak to someone at your nearest sexual health service

***Currently there is an increase in people diagnosed with syphilis in the general community.***



# Jock Itch & Tinea



- Jock itch and tinea are scaly and have a red appearance
- Jock itch and tinea will have a smell of dirty socks so again, it is useful to do the health check before the client showers.
- Fungal infections can transmit skin-to-skin so it is helpful to be able to recognise and educate the client
- Fungal infections can be transmitted by surfaces and towels so keep that in mind if offering an alternative service, clean the room and be mindful when handling used linens
- For information on how to manage a booking with a client with jock itch or tinea contact RhED to speak to one of our health educators

# Jock Itch & Tinea

## Symptoms

- Brick-red rash, starting in the crease of the groin & spreading to the inner thighs and pubic area
- It often has a scaly, irregular border

## Treatment

- Avoid soap and chemicals, bathe the area in salt water
- There are a number of over the counter antifungal creams which are effective treatments

## Prevention

- Try to keep area as dry as possible
- Wear cotton underwear

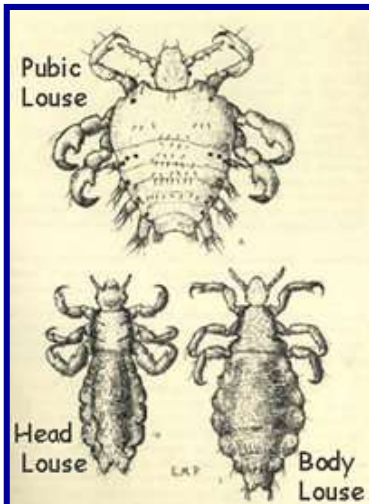
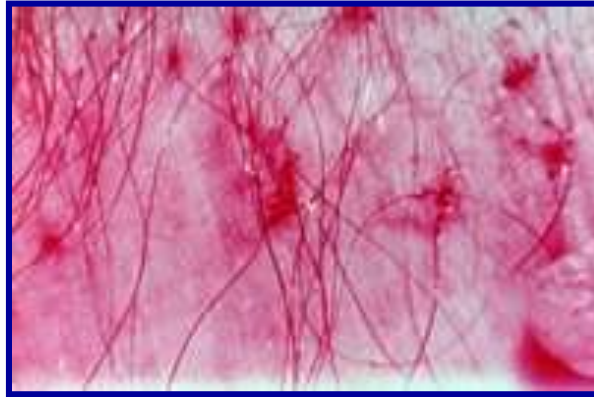
## Note

- Fungi grows in warm, moist environments. They can be transmissible especially if the person is susceptible to a fungal infection, for example, people with autoimmune conditions or diabetes





# Identifying Pubic Lice/Crabs



# Pubic Lice/Crabs

## Symptoms

- Itching in the pubic area
- You usually don't see them, if it is a bad infestation you may see them jumping around the pubic area
- May cause skin irritation

## Treatment

- There are a number of over-the-counter creams you can purchase from chemists which are effective treatments

## Prevention

- The best way to prevent infestation is to avoid direct contact with lice

## Note

- Pubic lice are tiny insects that look like crabs
- Linens will need treatment as well as the infected area





# Identifying Hepatitis A, B & C

## Symptoms of Hepatitis A, B or C

- Often nothing – detected by a blood test.
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Fever
- Dark urine
- Tiredness
- Jaundice – yellowish skin & white of eyes
- Right side pain under the ribs

# Hepatitis A, B & C

## Hepatitis A

- Is transmitted through faecal-oral transmission eg food preparation, anal sex, oral sex and rimming

**Prevention:** You can be vaccinated against Hep A, talk to your GP

## Hepatitis B

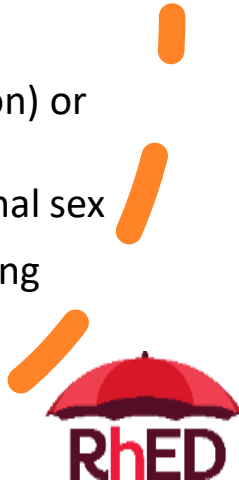
- May be transmitted through semen, vaginal fluids, saliva and blood

**Prevention:** Vaccinations for Hep B can be free through your nearest Sexual Health Clinic. Safer sex practices, use condoms for vaginal and anal sex. Avoid sharing injecting equipment, including spoons, swabs and water.

## Hepatitis C

- Is transmitted through direct blood to blood contact eg sharing injecting equipment (most common) or kink play that pierces the skin, can be sexually transmissible where there is trauma to the skin, eg anal sex

**Prevention:** Never share injecting equipment, avoid sharing razors or toothbrushes, use condoms especially where fresh blood is present (including menstrual blood)



# Identifying Coronal Papillae / Pearly Papules



- Coronal papillae are skin tags, nearly all the same size, that sometimes appear around the head of the penis or labia (less common)
- Pearly Papules are normal glands that stand out more on some people
- They develop naturally and you can't catch them
- You can differentiate them from warts because they sit in nice regular lines that remain the same over time, and are always found around the head of the penis



# Genital Hygiene

- Warm water is fine for washing the genital area, avoid douching and soap
- Always wipe from front to back after going to the toilet
- Wear cotton underwear whenever possible
- Use plenty of lubricant and if you experience irritation, try switching to another brand
- Urinate immediately after intercourse to flush out any bacteria in the urethra – this prevents UTIs
- If you offer fingering in your service, make sure clients wash their hands first



# Looking after yourself

- Establish boundaries between your personal and professional life. Try not to become too involved with clients.
- Prevent burnout by taking regular breaks from work. Having savings can help you to be able to take time off when you need
- Get enough sleep, drink plenty of water, eat fresh fruit and vegetables, exercise and get social connection
- Talk about issues with someone you trust before they become big problems
- Contact RhED for confidential support 1800 458 752 or email [sexworker@sexworker.org.au](mailto:sexworker@sexworker.org.au)





RhED Health Educators can provide one-to-one support with any questions you may have about working in the sex industry.

For examples of how to manage clients who request services without a condom, or to manage a client who may have a STI, please contact us.

You can talk to us about anything that is unclear and/or any work practice situation that you want information about.

All consultations are private and confidential.

**1800 458 752 or email [sexworker@sexworker.org.au](mailto:sexworker@sexworker.org.au)**