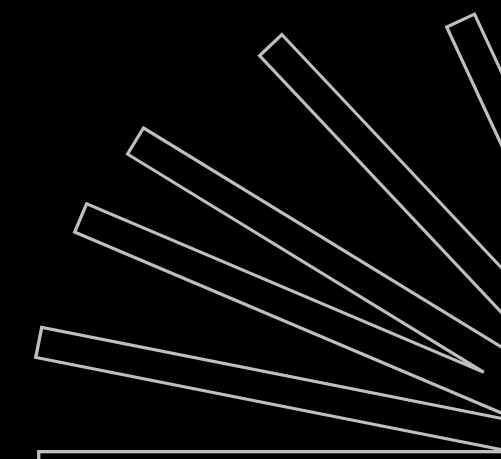
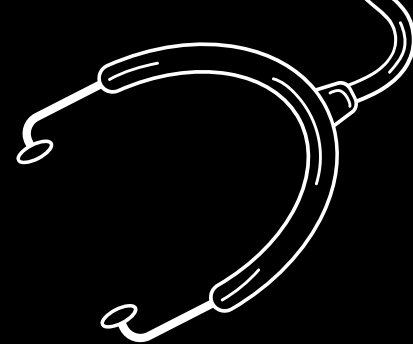
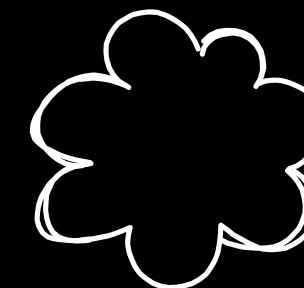
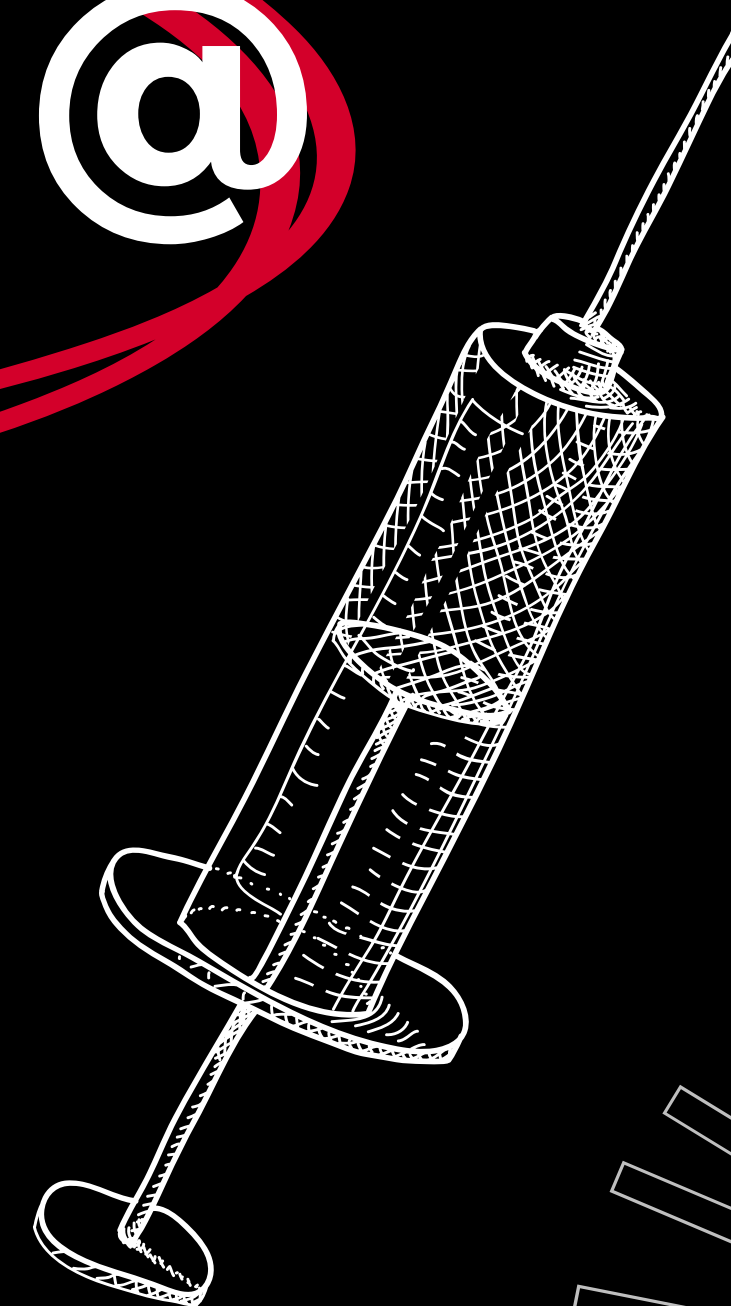
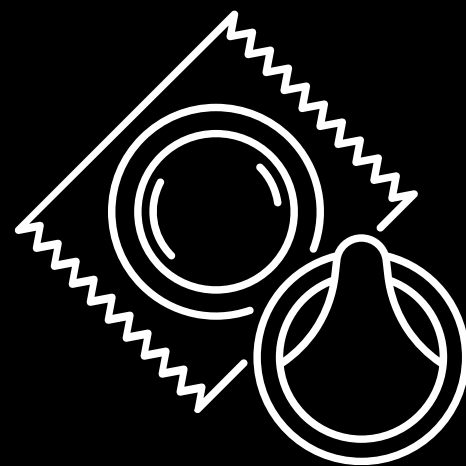
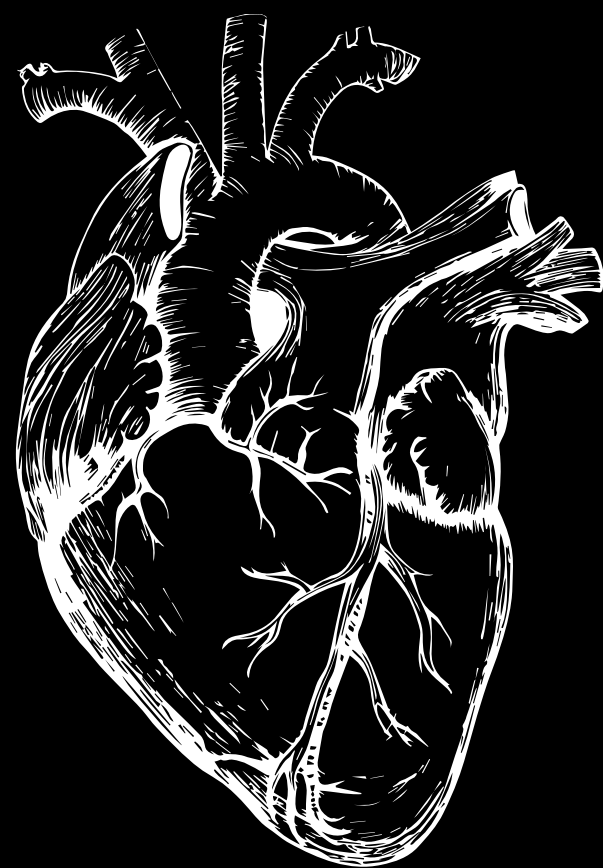


Sexual Health @ Work

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● RhED Health Educators ●

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Taking care of your sexual health at work

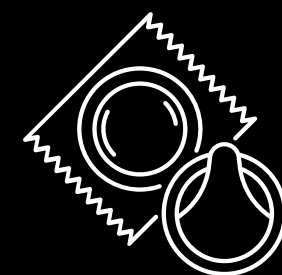
This presentation is for people who provide sexual services at work.

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 our body healthy 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.

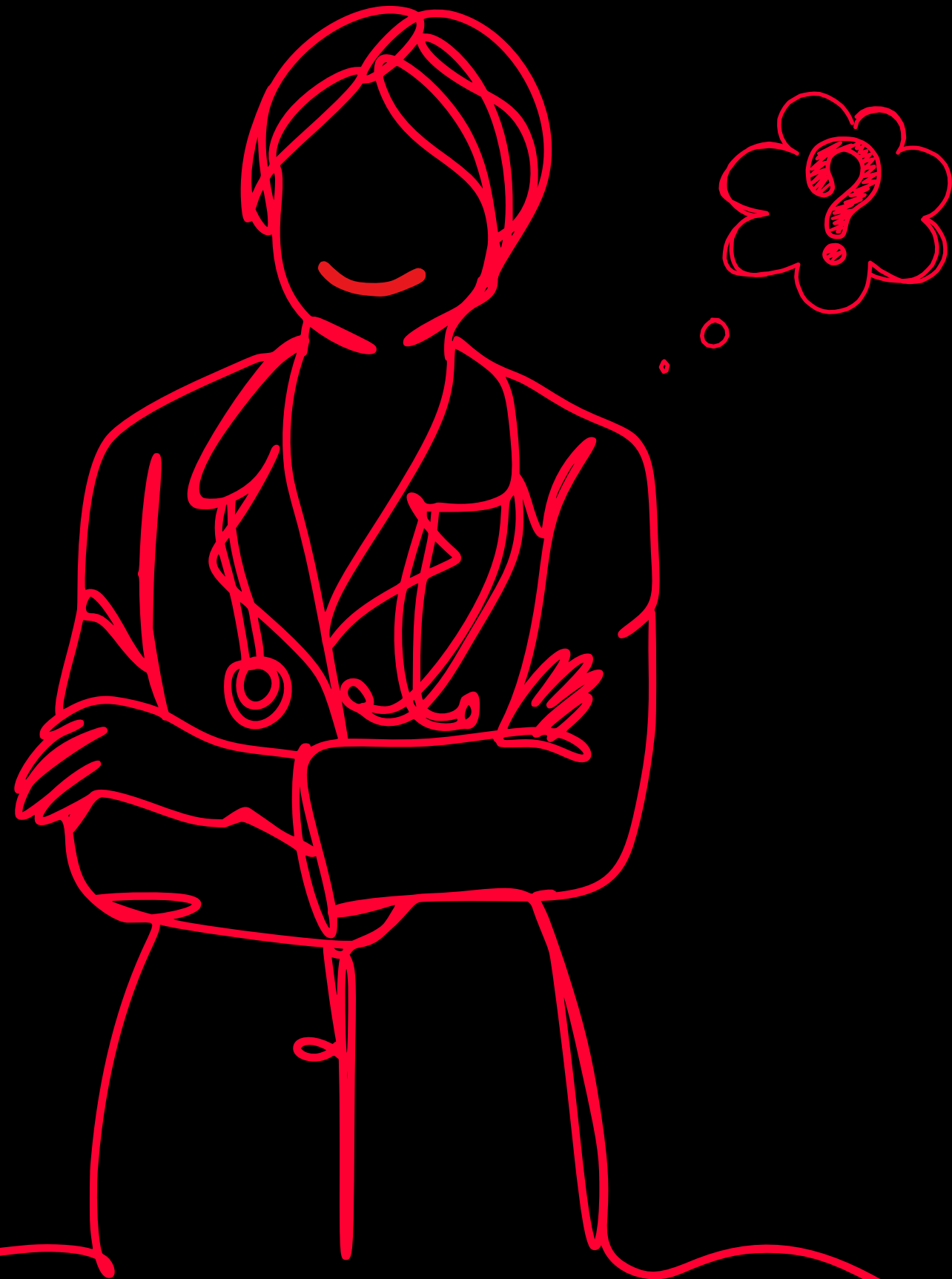
If you would like more information on sexual health please contact one of our Health Educators at RhED 1800 458 758 or email sexworker@sexworker.org.au





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.



STI screening for sex workers

STI screening usually covers:

Blood test for:

- HIV
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B

Self-collection of urethral first-pass urine or vaginal swab (for chlamydia and gonorrhoea).

GPs often don't routinely collect anal and oral swabs for cis-het women so ensure you ask for them if needed.

Mandatory testing is no longer a requirement in Victoria. Sex workers should get tested according to their individual risk profile (e.g. How often are you having sex? Do you use barrier methods? What services/sexual acts do you engage in?)

Safer sex supplies



CONDOMS

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:

[Better Health Channel](#)

[Internal Condom Animation #1](#)

DAMS

Used for oral contact, e.g. mouth to vulva or anus

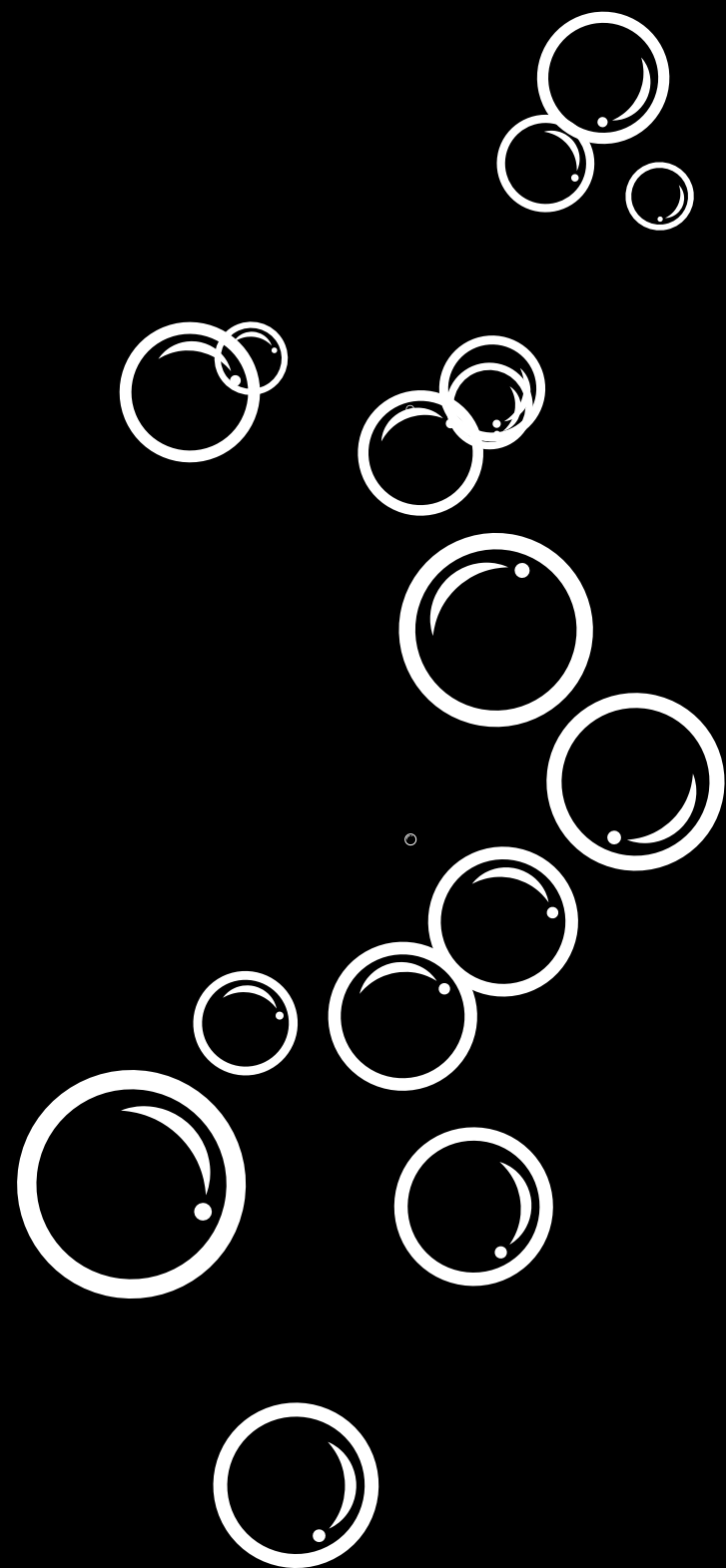
GLOVES

Useful for spills and condom breakages

SPONGES

Soft tampons for working when menstruating



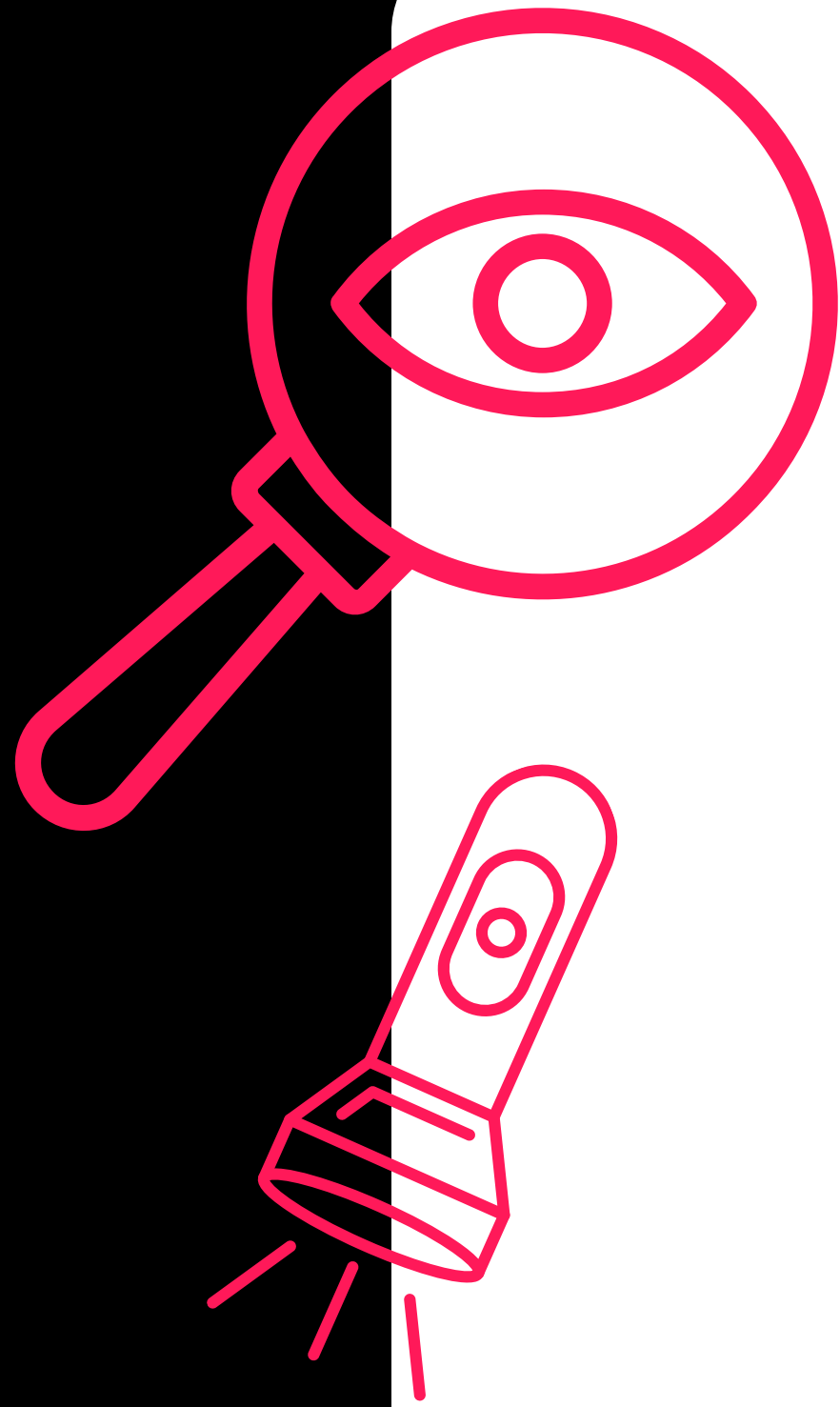


Lubricant

Lubricant is imperative in sex work and it is important to know the right kind to use!

- Lube is important in preventing skin tears and condom breakage.
- Water-based lubricant should be used as oil based lube can cause condom breakages.
- Use the one that feels right for you, you may want to try a few different brands.
- Flavoured lubes can cause irritation and thrush for many people! For penetrative vaginal sex, use flavoured lubes with caution (or not at all).





Client Health Checks

It is standard practice for sex workers to conduct a 'health check' (visual check for visible signs of an STI) prior to a booking starting. It is important to do the health check **BEFORE** the client showers or goes to the toilet.

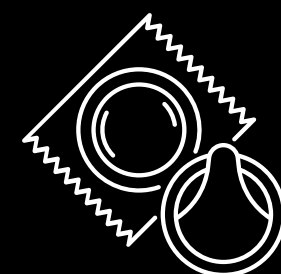
- You need good lighting (use a torch or your phone light).
- Look around the client's whole pubic area, through the hair, along the base, shaft and tip of the penis or along the outer and inner lips of the vulva for;
 - Signs of infections (redness, swelling, oozing, bad smell).
 - Sores, rashes, blisters, and warts.
- Check under the balls and around the anus.
- Look inside the client's mouth for any sores if offering kissing or oral on you.
- If you suspect the client has symptoms of an STI, you can refuse the service or offer a different service (such as hand relief with a glove).
- Remember if you're unsure you can always ask a colleague or manager for a second opinion!

★ Using lube can help prevent condom failure



What if a condom breaks or comes off?

Unfortunately this happens occasionally. If it does, try and remain calm! Reach out to someone to debrief if you need to.



Stop the service.

Withdraw the penis. If the condom has slipped off try and hold the base closed as you pull it out.

Urinate.

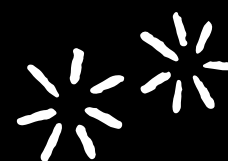
Squat in the shower and 'bear down' or try and push out with the muscles in and around your vagina. This should help push out condom pieces and cum.

If the condom is still inside you, put on a glove and carefully try and get it out. Be gentle to not cause tears in your vagina which might increase the chance of infection if the client has an STI.

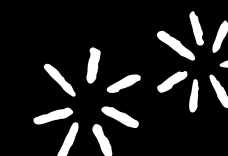
Do not douche. This may push ejaculate upwards.

Have an STI screen and consider emergency contraception (morning after pill).





Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs)



WARNING

The next slides contain graphic images. Stop here if you don't want to see them.

These images will help you identify the symptoms of an STI so that you can decline a booking, offer an alternative service, or make whatever choice you think is best for yourself.

For more detailed information on STIs you can consult the [Scarlet Alliance Red Book](#) or [Melbourne Sexual Health Centre's Fact Sheets](#)

Genital Warts

★ Vaccines are available for some types of HPV in Victoria. If you went to school in Victoria, you may have already had the vaccine.



ABOUT

A very common STI that is caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Often people have HPV without knowing as they don't have any visible warts. This is known as a subclinical infection.

SYMPTOMS

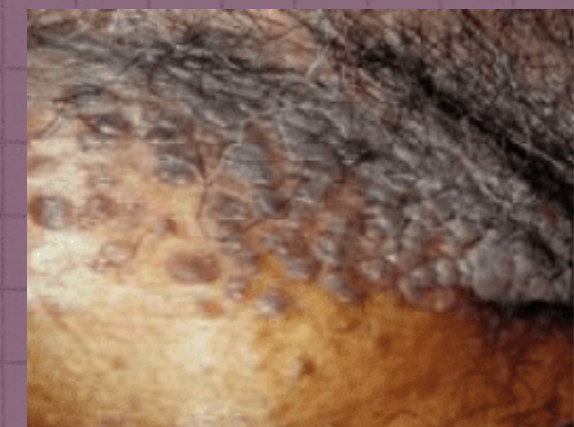
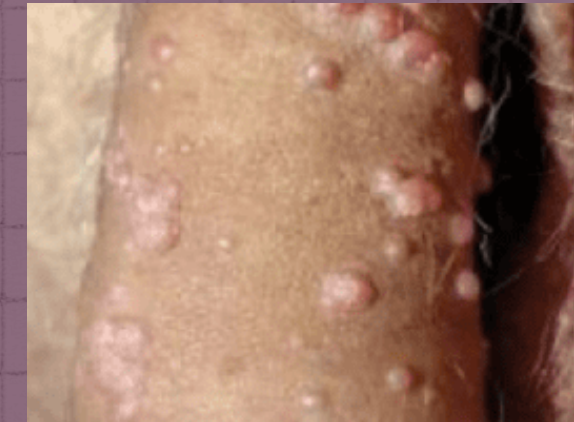
Often appear as painless growths that may be flat or raised, clustered together, or singular.

TRANSMISSION

Skin-to-skin contact during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. The virus can spread even if someone has no visible warts. Condom use may not prevent spread of HPV depending on where it is located.

TREATMENT

Most people's bodies will clear the infection over time (1-2 years) If you have visible warts you can have them frozen off by a medical professional, or apply prescribed ointments. If you have a wart removed, the virus may persist on the skin causing the wart to reappear. The wart will eventually disappear.



Herpes (HSV)

MOST PEOPLE HAVE AT LEAST ONE TYPE OF HSV (whether they know it or not). You can still work if you have HSV! Just don't work during an outbreak.



ABOUT

A very common skin condition that is caused by the Herpes Simplex Virus. Often people have HSV without knowing as they haven't had (or noticed) visible lesions. Once you contract HSV it stays in your body forever.

SYMPTOMS

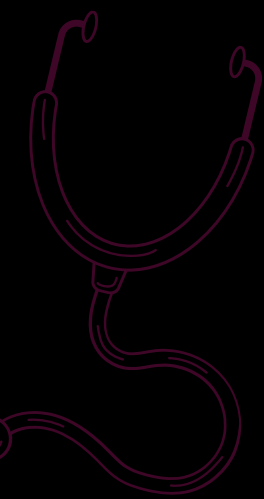
Initial itching or tingling sensation, blisters or pimple-like sores. An initial outbreak is usually the worst and can be accompanied by mild flu-like symptoms. Many people do not have symptoms.

TRANSMISSION

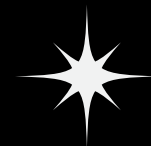
Skin-to-skin contact during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. The virus can spread even if someone has no visible lesions. HSV can spread even if you use condoms depending on where it is located on the skin.

TREATMENT

You can take anti-viral medication to reduce the severity or frequency of outbreaks, however there is no treatment to available to clear herpes from your body forever.



Chlamydia



Chlamydia often has no symptoms, like many other STIs. Using barrier protection will greatly reduce the risk of you contracting chlamydia.



ABOUT

Chlamydia is caused by bacteria. Chlamydia can infect the cervix, urethra, anus, throat and eyes.

SYMPTOMS

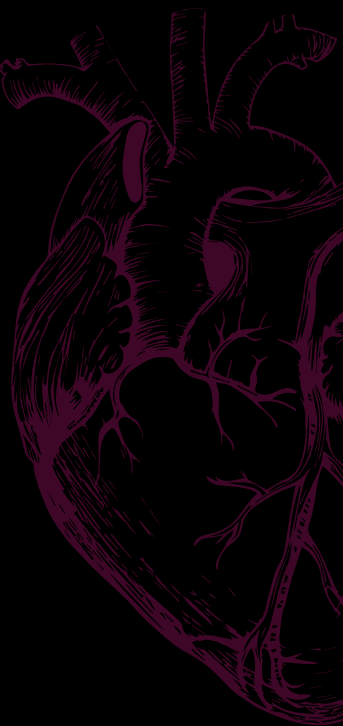
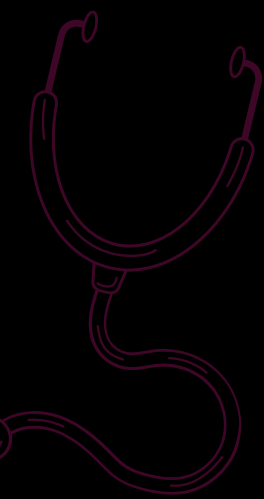
- Usually no symptoms
- May have pain or stinging when urinating
- Discharge or bleeding from the penis, anus or vagina.
- Sore, swollen testes, or spotting between periods and/or lower abdomen pain.

TRANSMISSION

Sexual contact with the bodily fluids of someone with the infection.

TREATMENT

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. You must not have sex for 7 days once you commence treatment. If your partner starts treatment after you, you must wait 7 days after they start treatment to have sex with them.



Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea can infect the throat so ensure you are requesting a throat swab when you get an STI test.



ABOUT

Gonorrhoea is caused by bacteria. Gonorrhoea can infect the genitals, throat, anus, and eyes.

SYMPTOMS

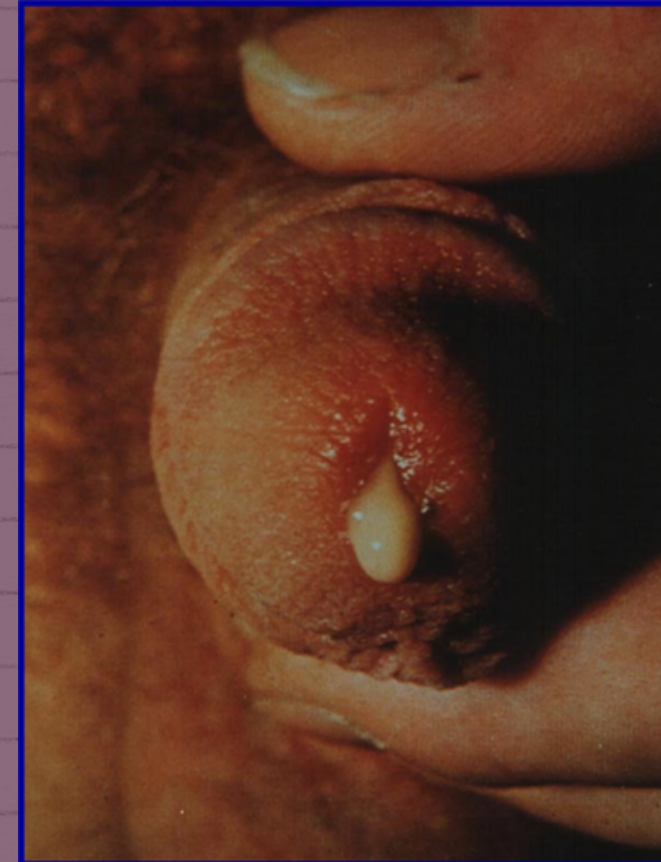
- May have no symptoms.
- Pain or stinging when urinating.
- Increased vaginal discharge or yellow/greenish discharge from the penis.
- May also be found in the throat and eyes.

TRANSMISSION

Sexual contact with the bodily fluids of someone with the infection. Using condoms and dams will reduce risk of transmission.

TREATMENT

Gonorrhoea is treated with antibiotics. Some strains of gonorrhoea are now resistant to many antibiotics and may take longer to treat.



Syphilis

Syphilis is curable but if left untreated, can lead to serious complications so make sure you are getting tested regularly. Often initial symptoms go undetected.



ABOUT

Syphilis is an STI caused by bacteria that is spread via skin-to-skin contact. Syphilis has 3 stages and only the first 2 are infectious. Third stage syphilis happens 10-30 years after initial infection and can lead to serious disease in the brain and heart (and death).

SYMPTOMS

- First stage: A sore (ulcer) on the genitals, anus, or mouth. Sore is usually painless and may be hard to notice.
- Second stage: Flat red rash on soles of feet, palms of hands or over entire body. Swollen lymph nodes and joints.
- Third stage: Disease of brain, heart and nervous system.

TRANSMISSION

Skin-to-skin sexual contact during initial stages of disease. Transmission is higher when sores or rash are present.

TREATMENT

Syphilis is treated with antibiotics.



Jock Itch/Tinea

Tinea can spread via towels, linen, and showers.



ABOUT

Fungal infection affecting the skin that is highly contagious.

SYMPTOMS

- Itching and stinging.
- Red scaly rash that is shaped like a ring (annular).

TRANSMISSION

Can spread via skin-to-skin contact or contact with towels and sheets.

Tinea thrives in warm, moist conditions so make sure to dry skin thoroughly and let it air out as much as possible.

Clean the shower after use to avoid transmission of tinea on feet (athlete's foot)

TREATMENT

Tinea is treated with anti-fungal creams and sometimes oral medication.



Pubic Lice

ABOUT

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

SYMPTOMS

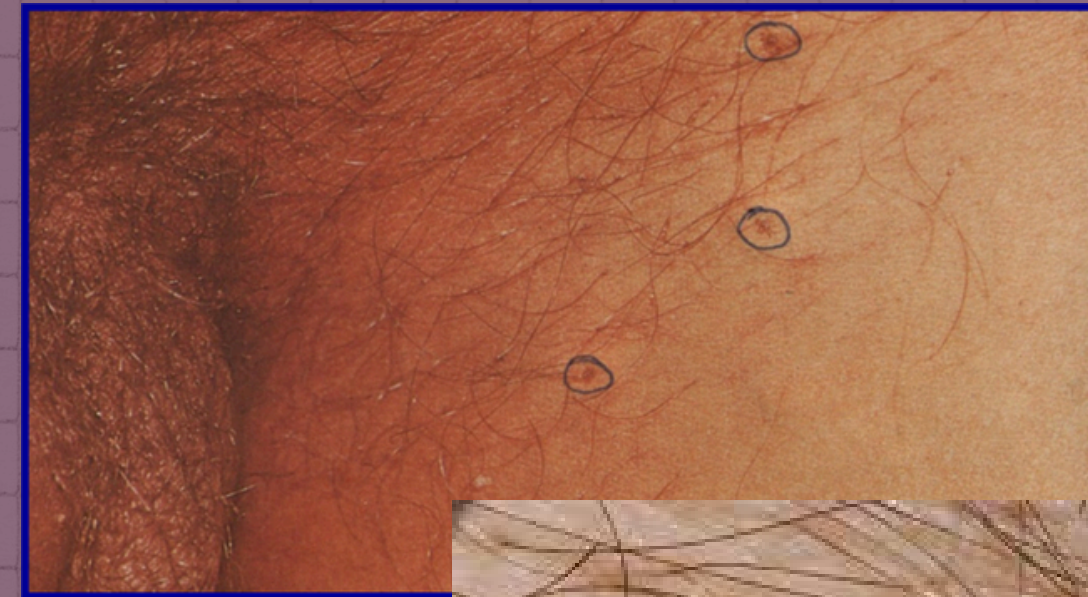
- Itching in the pubic area
- You usually don't see them, if it is a bad infestation you may see them jumping around the pubic area.
- Spots of blood or fine, gritty debris in underwear.
- Tiny blue spots around genitals.

TRANSMISSION

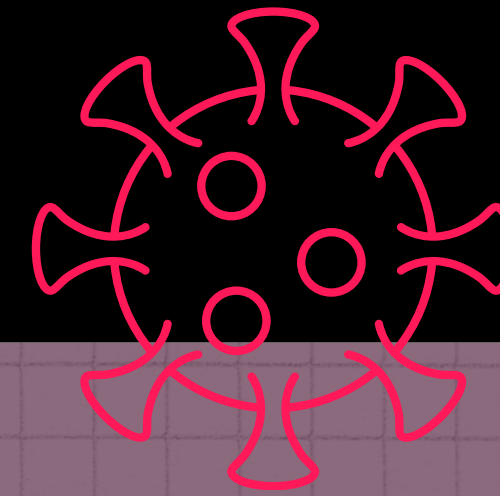
Skin-to-skin sexual contact or sharing towels or a bed.

TREATMENT

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



Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs)



ABOUT

Blood-borne viruses (BBVs) are viruses that are carried in the blood. The three major BBVs in Australia are hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

SYMPTOMS

Sometimes no symptoms, or sometimes fever, jaundice, nausea and general malaise.

You won't be able to 'tell' a client has a BBV.

TRANSMISSION

BBVs spread when the blood of someone with a BBV comes in contact with your bloodstream. This can happen through sexual activity or sharing injecting equipment.

TREATMENT

Treatment varies based on what virus someone has.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a disease of the liver. The infection can be short term or long term. Most people born in Australia would've received a Hepatitis B vaccine shortly after birth.

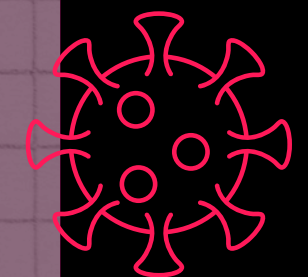
Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver and can be life threatening. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C, however it can be treated with antiviral medication.

HIV

A virus that damages the immune system. HIV isn't curable however is treatable.

People being treated for HIV who have undetectable levels of HIV can't transmit HIV sexually. This is known as U=U (undetectable equals untransmissible).





Non-infectious presentations and other conditions



WARNING

The next slides contain graphic images. Stop here if you don't want to see them.

These images will help you distinguish between STIs and non-infections presentations and other conditions.

For more detailed information on STIs you can consult the Scarlet Alliance Red Book or Melbourne Sexual Health Centre's Fact Sheets

Coronal Papillae / Pearly Papules

Coronal Papillae/Pearly Papules are NOT AN STI AND ARE NOT INFECTIOUS. It is safe to stay with a client with this presentation.



ABOUT

Coronal Papillae/Pearly Papules are not an STI.

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 for vaginas

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 urinary tract infections.

If you offer fingering in your service make sure clients wash their hands first.



Thrush (yeast infections/ candidiasis)

Thrush is a common condition caused by an overgrowth of yeasts that naturally occur in the vagina. Symptoms usually include a thick discharge and vaginal skin irritation.

Thrush is often treated well with topical creams, oral tablets, or pessaries (tablets inserted into the vagina). It's important to note that topical creams and pessaries weaken condoms.

Sometimes people experience recurrent thrush for a range of reasons such as other conditions they have, the type of candida present, antibiotic use, pregnancy, and more. This can be really frustrating to treat, and often you may need ongoing treatment for months. Your GP will be best place to guide you through this.

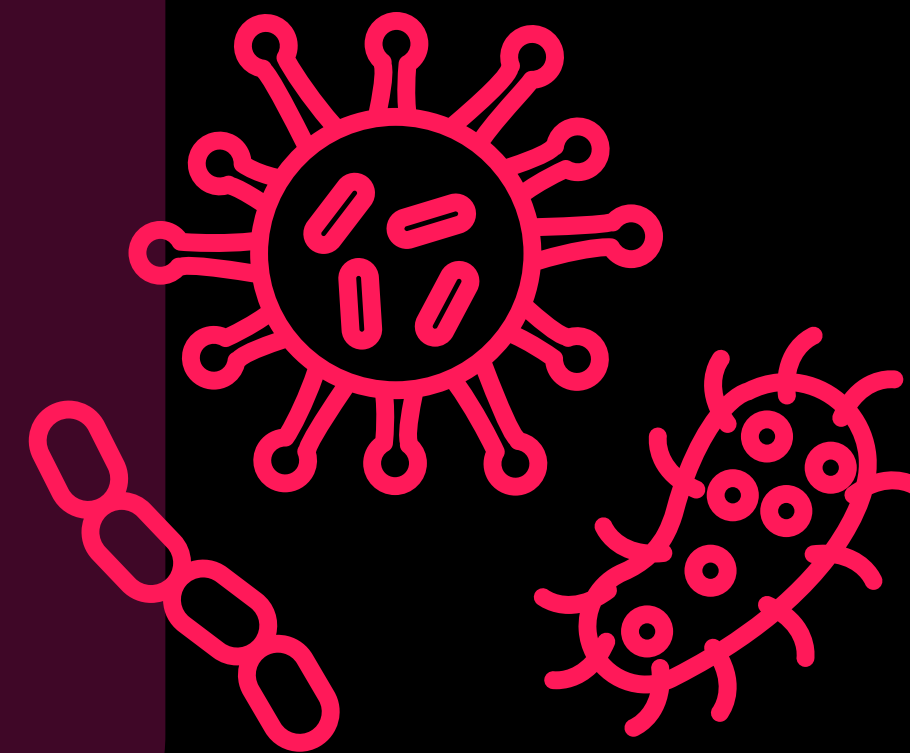
Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

BV occurs when there is an imbalance in the amount of normal bacteria that is usually present in the vagina.

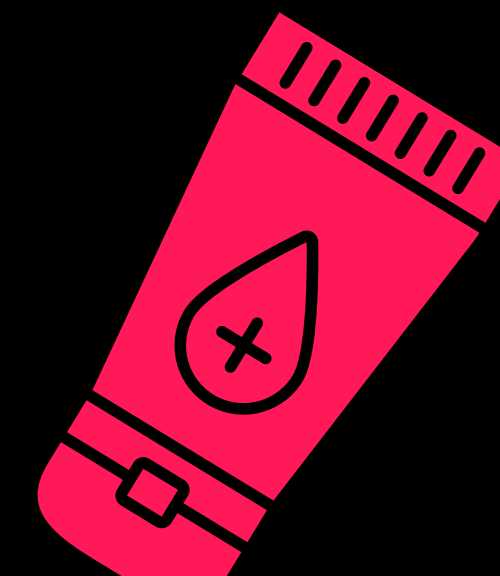
Frustratingly, BV may occur after thrush treatment, and BV treatment can lead to thrush. This is due to a change in vaginal microflora. BV can also be caused by a change in sexual partners, douching, not using condoms, or having a sexual partner who has a vagina.

BV symptoms may include increase in discharge, change in odour (a fishy smell), and vaginal discomfort.

BV often resolves on its own, however sometimes you may need a course of antibiotics for treatment.



Genital Hygiene for penises



If you have a foreskin, gently pull back the foreskin and wash underneath daily. This can reduce the accumulation of smegma (white, oily discharge under the foreskin).

Warm water is fine for washing the genital area, avoid soap and perfumed products.

Always be gentle pulling back foreskin if you have one.

Ensure your genitals are completely dry (including under the foreskin) before putting on underwear. This will help prevent the growth of microorganisms.

Never attempt to treat skin irritation yourself - seek medical advice.

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

UTIs are common, with 1 in 2 people with vaginas and 1 in 20 people with penises experiencing a UTI over their lifetime.

UTIs are caused by bacteria in the urinary tract. Infection can occur in the bladder (most common), urethra, or kidneys.

UTI symptoms can include

- needing to urinate frequently,
- pain/burning when urinating,
- constantly feeling like you have a full bladder,
- bloody, cloudy, or smelly urine.

If you have the above symptoms plus fever, chills, vomiting, and pain in the lower back you might have a kidney infection and need urgent medical attention.

Antibiotics are often used to treat UTIs however it depends on infection location and severity. Seek medical attention if you think you have a UTI.



You can prevent UTIs by:

- Drinking lots of water,
- Treating vaginal infections (such as thrush) promptly,
- Going to the toilet as soon as you feel the urge to urinate, rather than holding on.
- Emptying your bladder after sex.
- Avoiding constipation.



Looking out for yourself

Try not to compromise your boundaries even when clients nag and push you! This can be hard sometimes, but your health and wellbeing is the most important thing. If you would like help coming up with ways to say no to clients, you can chat to us.

It is always safest to only offer services with barrier protection (condoms and dams). If you provide a service without condoms/dams you need to increase the frequency at which you have STI tests.

Most STIs are very treatable, however if you don't know you have something, you can't treat it! STI tests are our best protection.



thank you

PRESENTED BY

RhED Health Educators



RhED is a program of Better Health Network (BHN) and acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government



RhED

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