

REST

Caring for your health
while in the sex trade

At REST, our mission is to provide pathways to freedom, safety, and hope to people involved in the sex trade. This book isn't meant to enhance your sex work, but to help you stay safer and healthier while you're working.

This self-care guide is written to help you take care of yourself while doing sex work. It cannot be substituted for advice from a non-judgmental health care provider who can diagnose and treat you based on your individual needs.

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No Days Off

What to Use While on Your Period

Product	Is it safe?	Why?
Unused makeup sponges	SAFE	Materials found in unused sponges are safe to use
Household sponges	NOT SAFE	Can lead to tearing of vagina and/or condoms
Sea sponges	NOT SAFE	May contain bits of sand, rocks, etc. that can irritate and tear vagina and cause infection
Diaphragm	SAFE	Its purpose is for use in your vagina
Douching	NOT SAFE	Washes away body's natural protection from infection
Unrolled tampons	NOT SAFE	Pieces of cotton can get stuck in the vagina and cause infection
Birth control sponge	NOT EFFECTIVE	Not intended for soaking up blood

Working on Your Period

Using Sponges

- If your flow is light, you may be able to use the sponge for up to eight hours
- If your flow is heavy, you may have to put it in right before a trick and remove it right after
- If you use more than one sponge, make sure to take out as many as you put in
- Removal: Lost the sponge? Don't panic:
 - Try squatting and pushing like you're trying to poop
 - A warm bath may make it heavier/easier to grab

Diaphragm

- Initially fitted by health care provider
- When on your period, it needs to be changed every four hours

Working with a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

Quick Facts

- Having one UTI increases your risk for getting another in the future—you cannot become immune to UTIs

Symptoms of a UTI

- Frequent and painful peeing
- Dribbling and/or trickling pee
- Feeling like you need to pee but you physically cannot

Prevention/Protection

- Pee before and after sex to flush out bacteria/germs
- Drink lots of water and pee often
- Wipe front to back after using the bathroom
- Use condoms to protect yourself from bacteria
- If going from anal sex to vaginal sex, use a new condom

Treatment

- Antibiotics prescribed by a health care provider
- Cranberry tablets/cranberry juice *may help* treat UTI
 - Drinking sugary cranberry juice has NO positive effect
- If not treated:
 - A UTI can lead to kidney infections and/or kidney damage

Working with BV (Bacterial Vaginosis)

Quick Facts

- BV stands for bacterial vaginosis (infection of the vagina causing discomfort and swelling)
- Having BV can make it easier to catch sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Symptoms of BV

- White or gray vaginal discharge that is abnormal for you
- Painful or itchy vagina
- Fish-like odor after sex
- Burning sensation while peeing

Prevention/Protection

- Use condoms (the same type of condom each time is recommended to avoid irritation)
- Avoid douching

Treatment

- Sometimes it goes away on its own, but it often doesn't
- Health care providers can prescribe antibiotics

Working While Pregnant

Recommendations

- Gentle sex is unlikely to cause harm to your baby
- Make sure to continue to use condoms because pregnancy does not protect you from STIs
- Clean sex toys well between each use because they can give you an infection which could hurt the baby
- If being on your back makes you feel dizzy, you should use pillows to sit up slightly
 - If you feel dizzy, this is a signal that the baby feels dizzy too, and needs you to move to a new position to get more oxygen

See a Health Care Provider if:

- You have a vaginal infection or a UTI—this can cause early labor
- You experience heavy bleeding, regular contractions, or if your water breaks

Working After Giving Birth

Quick Facts

- After giving birth you will have bloody discharge for up to six weeks
 - This shows you that your body is not fully recovered and is still healing
- HIV can be given to someone through breastmilk

Recommendations

- While bloody discharge is present you should not put anything in your vagina (including tampons and sponges) because your body is not done healing
 - If you need to work within six weeks of giving birth you should avoid vaginal sex until the bleeding is done
- If you have a laceration (cut or tear) after giving birth you should wait to have vaginal or anal sex until it is healed
 - If you have sex before it is healed, it can delay healing and increase your risk for infection

What's on Your Menu?

Safety Tips to Keep in Mind

Oral Sex

Including: CIM, BBJ, ATM, DATO, DATY, TUMA, DP

- Giving ATM, DATO, TUMA or receiving DP increases the risk of getting Hepatitis A and B, E. coli, and other bacterial infections
- Openings in the mucous lining of the mouth can increase chances of getting HIV
 - Avoid flossing or brushing teeth for one to two hours before and after oral sex
- Use condoms or a dental dam
- If the condom breaks, spit out any semen and rinse your mouth with an alcohol-based mouth wash (like Listerine)

Anal Sex

Including: ATM, DATO, TUMA, FF, DP, Greek

- Anything that will be entering anus should be cleaned before and after (especially if entering the vagina too)
- USE LUBE (the anus is not self-lubricating like the vagina)—the thicker the consistency of the lube, the better
- Use a condom to protect against STIs and bacteria

Enemas and Laxatives

- Avoid coffee enemas, vodka enemas, and other exotic enemas because your anus absorbs things quickly and can become irritated
- Wait two to three hours to have sex if you've used an enema
- Maximum recommended enema use: one in 24 hours
- Maximum recommended laxative use: one in 24 hours
- Using enemas too frequently can irritate the anus due to inflammation and affect body's ability to poop normally
- If there is no poop or liquid expelled after enema, you could be dehydrated or have a serious condition—see a health care provider
- **CAREFULLY READ AND FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS** that come with enema kits or equipment

Anal Soreness/Irritation

- Mix corn starch with cold water until it has a paste-like consistency, apply, and repeat daily as needed
- Taking over the counter pain relievers before pooping can help

Fisting

- You may experience soreness, gas pain, irregular poops, or slight spotting of blood when you wipe yourself
 - This should go back to normal within 24 hours
- Latex gloves should be used to protect both people because they are stronger than condoms
- Gloves need to be longer than the area inserted
- Use a baby butt cream as a soothing protectant when you sleep
- Use a warm bath to soak sore bottom

Prostate Massage

- Avoid jerking or poking movements to protect from injury
- Wear latex gloves
- Short nails are preferred for safety

See a Health Care Provider if:

- You have a sudden onset of anal pain, bleeding, and/or pus-like discharge
- There is any bloody diarrhea/poop
- Your symptoms don't go away within 24 hours

Vaginal Sex

Including: DATY, DP, FIV, BBFS

—

- Constant bleeding during or after sex is NOT normal

Fisting

- Avoid moving from anus to vagina without cleaning the body part or toy being used
- Use gloves AND lube
- Fisting may cause lacerations (cuts or tears)

See a Health Care Provider if:

- You have unusually bad pain or if you have any unusual discharge or bleeding during or after sex

Hygiene: Caring for Your Body

Vagina Care

Avoid:

- Garlic and yogurt—they do NOT treat odors or infection
- Vinegar—it does NOT tighten the vagina
- Douching is NOT safe—it upsets your body's natural defenses against infection

Recommendations:

- Witch hazel or over the counter hydrocortisone cream (on outer part of the vagina for itching/soreness)
- Ice packs (for soreness)
- Warm baths (for soreness)
- Kegel exercises (to help with bladder control)
 - To find the muscles, clench your muscles like you're pretending to hold in pee
 - Squeeze these muscles "up and in" for ten seconds, then rest for ten seconds
 - Repeat for a few minutes a day

Bathing

- Use mild, unscented soaps and warm water to clean the genital area (NOT inside the vagina)
- DON'T use very hot water or antibacterial soap
- DON'T use bleach or antiseptic spray (Bactine)—these are not safe for cleaning

Women:

- Feminine washes and feminine wipes are not advised because they can wipe away your vagina's natural protection
- If you feel you need to wash your vagina at any time, only wash with water

Men:

- Wash your genitals after sex with mild, unscented soap and warm water
- Wash your anal area before and after sex

Lube

- Lube, lotion, shampoo, and other things with fragrances should be avoided since they can cause irritation
- Check the ingredients—to avoid irritation, stay away from:
 - Glycerin, Nonoxynol-9, Petroleum, Propylene glycol, chlorodexidine gluconate

Water-based

- Doesn't irritate, stain, smell, or taste
- Leaves the body easily
- Can be used in all activities
- Safe on silicone toys
- Smaller risk of breaking condoms
- Note: thicker lubes dry up slower

Oil-based

- Will break down latex
- Can cause bacteria to grow (higher risk of infection)
- Okay for anal sex, but not for vaginal sex

Silicone-based

- Better for sensitive skin
- Don't use with silicone toys
- Safe to use with condoms

Sex Toys

- Wash first with soap and warm water, rinse carefully, let air-dry
 - Don't dry with fluffy towels because the fluff could stick to the toy
- Then clean with antifungal, viral, or bacterial spray or wipes
 - Examples of brands to buy: Pjur, Enviroclean
 - Make sure toys are completely dry before using them again
- Be aware of any ridges or folds in toys—clean and air-dry those areas thoroughly
- Vinyl toys—don't boil
- Rubber toys—be aware of latex allergies
- Stainless steel, silicone, and glass toys are less porous than vinyl or rubber, and less likely to host bacteria
- Sex toys should be stored separately from each other and other items, and are safest in a cloth bag (not plastic)

Birth Control

Sponge (*With Spermicide*)

- 88% effective in preventing pregnancy
- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Leave in place six hours after sex to kill the sperm
- Keep in no longer than 30 hours since anything longer could lead to Toxic Shock Syndrome (a life-threatening illness)
- Can easily be purchased at a pharmacy without seeing a health care provider
- Can be used during breastfeeding
- Few to no side effects
- Can increase the risk of yeast infections, UTIs, and HIV
- No one can tell you're using it
- Don't use if you're on your period or if allergic to nonoxynol-9 (spermicide)

Depo Provera (*Injection*)

- 96% effective in preventing pregnancy
- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Repeat injection every three months (13 weeks)
- Can be given up to two weeks late if the injection is missed

Possible Side Effects

- Absent periods or unscheduled spotting (common after one year of use)
- Heavy or prolonged bleeding and/or irregular periods

Oral Birth Control

(*"The Pill"*)

- 92% effective in preventing pregnancy
- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Take at same time every day and take one pill every day for the 28-day pack
- In Washington State, you can get a 12-month supply of birth control pills at the same time without paying out of pocket
 - Covered under preventative care services with any health plan
- Some pharmacies in Washington state allow pharmacists to prescribe birth control pills without a doctor's visit (like University District CVS pharmacy)
- The pill works by changing the hormones in your body to prevent pregnancy from being possible
- If you are taking antibiotics, the pill may not work as well
 - Use a second form of birth control to be sure

IUD (*Intrauterine Device*)

- 99% effective in preventing pregnancy
- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Long acting (lasts between 5–10 years)
- IUDs can be removed if/when you want to get pregnant
- Check for string between periods
- Some types of IUDs can make periods lighter or disappear and can decrease cramps
- See a health care provider if you have:
 - Severe abdominal pain, cramping, unusual bleeding, fever, chills, foul smelling vaginal discharge, painful sex, and/or positive pregnancy test

Plan B

- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Take no later than 72 hours after sex—the sooner you take it, the better (some people like to buy a dose ahead of time)
- Safe to take whenever you think you need to
- Shouldn't be used as regular birth control because it's not as effective as other regular, non-emergency birth control
- Can buy over the counter in most drug stores without a prescription or ID

Condoms

- 85% effective in preventing pregnancy
- Condoms are the best available protection against STIs, but they are not 100% effective in preventing them
- Condoms have an expiration date and should NOT be used after they expire
- Some condoms have ridges or are flavored and could cause irritation to the vagina or anus

Recommendations and Resources:

- Provide yourself with your own condoms to ensure:
 - They are not expired
 - That you aren't allergic to or irritated by the specific condom
- Where to get free condoms:
 - REST
 - Aurora Commons
 - Planned Parenthood
- Use condomfinder.org to find places near you that distribute free condoms and lube

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

General STI Facts

- These infections affect all genders
- If you've had the infection once, you can still get it again
- Having one untreated STI increases the risk of getting another
- Infection is possible with vaginal, anal, and oral sex (anytime there's exchange of body fluids or possible contact with open sores/lice)
 - Be aware that some sores may not be visible
- Latex condoms offer the best protection from infection
 - Uncovered sex puts you at higher risk for an STI

General Recommendations:

- Get tested for STIs every three months even if you have no symptoms, and get tested again any time you have symptoms
- Get a Pap smear every three years to screen for cervical cancer

Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS)

What Is It?

- HIV is a lifelong illness affecting body's ability to fight off infection

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex or blood to blood contact with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Vague symptoms that affect your whole body—it is recommended to get tested every three to six months or any time you are concerned you have been exposed
- Seroconversion is when the HIV virus begins to grow in your body, and generally takes place within a few weeks of getting infected
 - Seroconversion is often, but not always, accompanied by flu-like symptoms including fever, rash, muscle aches, and swollen lymph nodes

Treatment

- Treated with antiretroviral medications
- Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
 - This is used when you think you have been exposed to HIV
 - PEP should be taken as soon as possible, and must be taken within 72 hours after exposure, and for 28 days, to be effective
 - You get PEP from your health care provider
- Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
 - This is used daily to prevent HIV before exposure
 - This is over 90% effective in preventing HIV from sex
 - You can get PrEP from your health care provider or another organization
 - PrEP is readily available at low or no cost

If You're Pregnant:

- The baby can become infected while in the womb and during breastfeeding

Genital Herpes

How You Get It?

- Contact with herpes lesions on or in eyes, mouth, vagina, anus, or penis, or through contact with body fluids of someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Lesions first appear as small blisters on or around genitals, anus, or mouth
 - They can break and be very painful

Treatment

- It is not curable, but suppressive antiviral therapy can prevent and/or shorten outbreaks

If You're Pregnant:

- If untreated, herpes can lead to early birth
- Your baby can become infected during vaginal delivery

Hepatitis B

What Is It?

- This is a liver infection that can be short-term or long-term

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex or blood contact with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Within first six months after infection, symptoms might include fever, fatigue, yellow skin and eyes, and/or dark pee, and light-colored poop
- Can lead to liver damage and failure

Treatment

- You may need a specific IV medicine or vaccine if you think you've been exposed—see a health care provider

If You're Pregnant:

- The baby can become infected while in the womb

Prevention

- Get the Hepatitis B vaccine (covered by Medicaid)

HPV

(Human Papillomavirus, Genital Warts)

What Is It?

- It is a virus that usually goes away on its own, but some strains cause cancer in all genders (cervical, vulvar, vaginal, penile, and throat cancers)

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Painless genital warts or no symptoms

Screening/Prevention

- Get pap smear every three years to detect cervical cancer early
- Ask your health care provider if DNA HPV testing with pap smear is the best choice for you
- Get the HPV vaccine if you're 26 or younger to prevent genital warts and HPV-related cancer (covered by Medicaid)

If You're Pregnant:

- You are unlikely to pass HPV to your baby while pregnant

Chlamydia

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Usually no symptoms, but could include discharge from genitals or burning feeling while peeing

Treatment

- Antibiotics
- If it is not treated and leads to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), your reproductive system can be damaged

If You're Pregnant:

- Chlamydia can spread from mother to baby, causing an eye infection, pneumonia, and/or early birth

Syphilis

How Do You Get It?

- Contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex

Symptoms

- Painless sores at first, then may eventually lead to a rash or other full-body symptoms

Treatment

- Antibiotics
- Can lead to life-threatening health problems if not treated

If You're Pregnant:

- Syphilis can pass from mother to baby in the womb, causing infection or early birth

Gonorrhea

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Most don't have symptoms, but symptoms may include discharge from genitals or burning feeling while peeing
- With an anal infection—you may have discharge, bleeding, soreness

Treatment

- Antibiotics can help stop the progression
 - They won't undo the damage that has already been done
- Gonorrhea in all genders can lead to reproductive problems if not treated

If You're Pregnant:

- The baby can become infected during vaginal birth

Trichomoniasis ("Trich")

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who's infected

Symptoms

- Pain with peeing, discharge from genitals (and fishy smell for women), itching, redness, or soreness of genitals

Treatment

- Antibiotics

If You're Pregnant:

- Increases risk of early birth or having a baby who weighs less

Pubic Lice (Crabs)

How Do You Get It?

- Vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who's infected
- Rarely from the clothing or bedding of an infected person

Symptoms

- Genital itching and visible white/gray tiny eggs attached to the hair or crawling lice that look like small crabs

Treatment

- Diagnosed by finding eggs or lice
- Treat with lice-killing lotion available over the counter

If You're Pregnant:

- There are no known problems for pregnancy caused by pubic lice

Healthcare for You

Seeing a Healthcare Provider

- Health care providers cannot report you for prostitution if you are 18 years or older
- They cannot tell the police any personal information you tell them by law
- Health care providers cannot give you any care without your permission—you can always refuse treatment
- If you are younger than 18, providers are required to report suspected abuse to Child Protective Services
- If one provider isn't helpful, remember that you can find someone else who works better with you and treats you with the respect you deserve
- Try to be as clear and honest as you can to get the best, most appropriate care
- Sometimes it feels scary to see a health care provider—taking a friend or supportive advocate may help!

Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room: When to Go

Urgent Care	Emergency Room
<p>If you cannot get an appointment with a primary care provider</p> <p>If you need to be seen today</p>	<p>Life-threatening illness or injuries</p> <p>Limb-threatening injuries</p> <p>If you have trouble breathing, extreme pain, or uncontrolled bleeding</p> <p>If urgent care is not open</p> <p>If you feel like you need to be seen right away</p>

Please don't delay if you think something is wrong—ignoring it can make it worse!

SANE Nurses

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) are nurses who specialize in trauma-informed care and can be found at these hospitals:
 - University of Washington Medical Center, Harborview, Swedish First Hill, Tacoma General, Evergreen, Overlake

Local Health Care Providers

- National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline
1-888-373-7888
- Swedish Community Specialty Clinic
(206) 860-6656; Cherry Hill (Seattle)
- Rotacare Free Clinic
(206) 414-6984; Lake City
- Puget Sound Christian Clinic
(206) 363-4105; Bitter Lake (North Seattle)
- Rainier Valley Community Clinic
(888) 355-9183; Rainier Valley
- Neighborcare Health
(206) 722-8444; Ballard, Pike Place, Rainier Valley, Wallingford, Central District, West Seattle, Georgetown, Lake City
- Planned Parenthood
1-800-230-7526; Northgate, University District, First Hill, Capitol Hill, West Seattle, Bellevue
- STD/Public Health Clinic King County (at Harborview)
(206) 744-3590; Seattle (South of First Hill)
- HealthPoint
1 (866) 893-5717; West Seattle, Tukwilla, Renton, Sand Point
- Country Doctor
(206) 299-1600; Seattle (east of Capitol Hill)

- Christ Free Community Clinic
(253) 736-2634; Auburn

- New Hope Health Center
(206) 453-1868; Tukwila

- North Helpline
(206) 367-3477; Lake City

- 3W Medical for Women
(206) 588-0311; University District

- International Community Health Services
(206) 788-3700; International District (also in Shoreline, South Seattle, Bellevue)

- SeaMar
(206) 219-5980; Central District (also International District, West Seattle, Bellevue)

- POCAAN (People of Color Against Aids Network)
(206) 322-7061; Rainier Valley

- Lifelong AIDS Alliance
(206) 957-1600; Seattle, Bellevue, Everett

REST Services

REST serves individuals of all ages and genders who have been trafficked or involved in the sex trade.

24/7 Hotline: (206) 451-REST

Skilled advocates respond to calls or texts from individuals who are in need of assistance or emotional support.

Drop-In Center

Open Monday – Thursday from 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. providing workshops, classes, survivor support groups, healing art, medical consultation, and dinner.

Emergency Receiving Shelter

The Shelter provides individual rooms for seven women (aged 18 or over) to stay for up to 30 days.

Community Advocacy

Advocates provide consistent relationships and case management to help identify needs, access resources, and reach the goals that are most important to you.

**If you need assistance,
call or text our 24/7 hotline:
(206) 451-REST (7378)**

known.

You deserve to be loved.

accepted.