



# Infusion

VWHC Women's Health Information Centre

## Prescription: *Pleasure*

### The Collective

The VWHC Women's Health Information Centre (formerly the Vancouver Women's Health Collective) is a volunteer based, charitable, non-profit organization which has been in existence since 1972. We work to promote and support the idea of women helping women to help themselves, and to help women develop a pro-active approach to their own healthcare. We carry out a range of services and activities for women in Greater Vancouver and across BC, including a health information centre and helpline, health practitioner, holistic practitioner and therapist files, educational work, support groups, publications, lobbying and advocacy.

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### Infusion

*Infusion*, VWHC Women's Health Information Centre's newsletter, is a forum to connect us with our members and the community at large around women's health issues and activities at the Collective.

Submissions relevant to women's health or well-being are always welcome and participation in this form is much encouraged. Leave any messages at the collective, or drop a note in our newsletter box. *Infusion* is published three times a year.

All opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the VWHC.

### Newsletter Committee

A.J. Gray  
 Brenda Kent  
 Anne Merrett-Hiley  
 Lynn Wyminga  
 & the *Wild Wimmen* of the  
**VWHC Women's Health  
 Information Centre**

by Anne Merrett-Hiley

Over the past decade there has been a gradual shifting of focus in the area of health care. Moving away from the traditional Western medical approach that tended to primarily search for scientific causes of disease and provide treatment for symptoms, many consumers and health care providers alike are exploring the concept of holistic health. Holistic health care recognizes that health is not simply the absence of illness. Rather, it is the connection between the wellness of one's mind, body and spirit that determines the overall health of an individual. Regardless of what medical treatments are offered optimal healing occurs when an individual addresses the factors that may have contributed to the illness in the first place. These can, for example, range from lifestyle behaviours to the need to work through emotional distress. By defining health in a more holistic manner the visioning of health care and wellness also changes. Holistic health care encourages people to get involved in their health and make positive changes in their lifestyle to the extent that they are able.

Much of the research that has formed the foundation of holistic health care has originated from research focussing on the mind-body connection. This research examined such questions as how do our thoughts, feelings and behaviors inter-relate and influence our health? The two primary conclusions of the mind-body research are that specific behaviors contribute to illness and that psychological and emotional reactions directly affect physiological function. That is, any disease or disorder is caused or made worse by stress, thus altering our thoughts, behaviors and/or feelings, will impact our state of health.

While the concept of holistic health is empowering in that it gives an individual more control over their state of health and wellness, it is important not to blame individuals for their illness. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that many sources of stress are institutionalized. There are a multitude of social and political forces that impact women, the way we think about ourselves and our ability to engage in self-care practices. Adequate housing, food, social support and access to educational and health care services, just to name a few, are basic determinants of health care that form the foundation of individual health. Altering one's thoughts, behaviors and feelings will never make up for inadequate living conditions. A holistic model of health and wellness acknowledges the connection and interplay between the individual, their environment and the resulting stress that this can cause.

Holistic health research has found that by altering what we think to more pleasurable thoughts we can positively impact our immune and endocrine systems by decreasing our bodies' metabolism, heart rate and rate of breathing and blood pressure. In fact, in a relaxed state our brainwaves change to the lower alpha, theta and delta waves, typically associated with a deep rest. Just as stimulating an area of the hypothalamus can cause a response associated with stress, so by reducing the stimulus a state of relaxation results. The more

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# THE PLEASURE OF BREASTFEEDING

by Anna-Lisa Boye

linear model of cause and effect that dominated the health care field for so long has been revised to be more circular, and as such more empowering. We can and do have influence over our health and wellness by the manner in which we choose to express and exercise our thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

A tremendous stress reducer can be pleasure and the anticipation of pleasure. Given that our attitudes about a situation can have a significant positive or negative impact on our health and state of wellbeing, it makes sense that if we allow for the inclusion of pleasurable activities we maximize our wellness. There are many activities that can help foster and develop feelings of pleasure, a lot of which are relatively inexpensive and easy to access. The focus of this particular newsletter will be to explore a range of pleasurable activities such as aphrodisiacs, aromatherapy and self-pleasure in an attempt to encourage and entice you to incorporate activities and behaviors that will fill you with positive thoughts and pleasure filled feelings. By connecting with your inner wisdom and listening to your body you can learn what gives you pleasure. There are many activities that bring pleasure and each woman is unique in her preferences. I invite you to find ways to care for and pleasure your mind, body and spirit, for in doing so you are fostering an atmosphere of wellness in your life!

Some books which helped develop this article and which would be suggested for further reading on the subject of mind-body connection and wellness include:  
Benson, Herbert & Eileen M. Stewart (1993). The Wellness Book. New York: Fireside  
Borysenko, Joan (1987). Minding the Body, Mending the Mind. Reading Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.  
Northrup, C. (1994). Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom. New York: Bantam Books.

Breastfeeding has given me a *pleasure* I have never known before; a *pleasure* that has created a beautiful bond between my baby and me. Before my pregnancy my breasts were simply a part of my body. As I watched my belly and breasts grow, it was not until after the birth of my son that I found out just how much *pleasure* I could possibly receive when the *steaming* blood in my breasts turned into *sweet* milk.

The contact between his lips and my nipples create sensations that are pleasurable to us both. As my son latches on and begins to suckle, our bodies begin to relax and release. The suckles and sounds that he makes bring such pure *pleasure* to my soul it is as if I am feeding him a part of me. Whether at work (vwhc), at home or at our favorite coffee lounge, we are able to bond and experience peaceful tender moments as he suckles filling his mouth with my sweet milk.

This *pleasure* is both physical and mental. Responding to my baby's needs allows me to respond to mine; moreover, it allows my emotions to turn to devotion. What I found was a desire to tune into my baby's sensitivities while acknowledging my own. If my baby becomes agitated, hungry or tired, it is only after breastfeeding that he is then content, pleased and relaxed. A smile appears upon his face and the gleam in his eyes shines up into mine.

My son is now 6 1/2 months old and although he has begun to eat solids we both know that he enjoys the breast best. Long after the breastfeeding session is over, it is knowing that I am able to give him the nourishment that he needs to grow that sustains this *pleasure!*

*to feed him is to nourish him,  
to touch him is to comfort him,  
to give pleasure is a deed accomplished,  
to receive pleasure is a desire identified.*

The following is taken from Valerie Ann Worwood's *The Complete Book of Essential Oils and Aromatherapy*.

Massage oils to increase the flow of breast milk:

	fennel	15 drops	* Choose only one
or	geranium	15 drops	essential oil.
or	clary-sage	10 drops	Do not mix.

Dilute oil in 2 tablespoons good quality nut or vegetable oil.

Massage the breasts in a circular motion beginning under the arms moving inward and downward, then work up towards the heart centre where the breasts divide. Massage once a day (preferably after a feeding) remembering to wash the oil off before breastfeeding your baby.

*Gaia Garden* sells these essential oils and they make a herbal tincture and an herbal tea for lactating mothers. *Gaia Garden* is located at 2672 West Broadway in Vancouver.



Drawing from INFAC (Infant Feeding Action Coalition) Canada Newsletter.

## Pleasure Pool

Brenda

Stirring in my sleep. I find you there  
Hand quiver to feel you  
Arms, ache, reach for you  
Tongue tingles to taste you....again

My breasts press closely to your back  
Your hair in my face...embrace  
Bodies, spoons in my pool  
Of crumpled sheets,  
and steam

## Aromatherapy: Essential Pleasures

*Delightfully crafted by Michelle Affolter*

Open your nose, that miraculous organ of 'scentual' delight, and embrace essential oils, pleasure bearers of the plant world, in all their succulent variety and simplicity. Be as the bee on an entranced voyage through a private garden of delights, the narcotic sensuality of rose, neroli and jasmine coaxing your heart to ecstasy. Rub your amazing body with sandal, cedar and rosewoods. Let your limbs feel the pleasure of trees, grounded and serene, your smooth bark, your skin caressed by the sun, the moon, the night, the dawn. Dive into a private bathroom pool of milk and vanilla, or soak in the sweet scent of ylang-ylang, thyme and sage - empowering and purifying.

Find pleasure in the strength of cedar, the fire of cinnamon, and the playfulness of orange. Oil your face with lavender and geranium and draw the flowers into our body by the gratefully recipient pores, the inner caverns of your breath quivering with the softly cascading wave of femininity that caresses your very core.... Ahhhh, the sweet balance that is woman!

Let soft chamomile kiss the tenderness of your skin, soothing and cool, while bergamot brings peace to your restless mind. Invite mugwort into your life and know new heights of awareness, new levels of joy and mindless realization. Blend patchouli and peru balsam and let them dance a sultry lover's dance in the steaming diffuser bowl, their passion fired by the glow of a gentle candle flame.

Plants know the pleasures of the ancients, of the elves and of fairyland, of butterflies and afternoon sunshine, of thunderstorms and the starry night. Let them help you to know the pleasure of your own soul and celebrate this discovery with the beauty of the green, living Earth. For what is pleasure without passion, spirit, serenity, hope and freedom? Pleasure is a dream unto itself, a knowing without knowing that encounters no time, no space, just the simplicity of the moment, the creation of God and the universe, the climax between life and your being. The painful ecstasy of the moment. Pleasure is the realization, the fulfillment of this moment to its ultimate goal and purpose, to its ultimate promise of love and sweetness and eternity...for pleasure is the sacred ecstasy of the soul.



## Pleasurable Herbs!

### *Herbal Aphrodisiacs*

*From the booklet **Hot Pantz - Do it yourself gynecology**, by Isabelle Gauthier and Lisa Vinebaum (Available in the Info Centre for \$5.00)*

Most of the plants mentioned here are spices. They work on the erogenous centres by carrying an intense flow of blood to the peripheral organs, which in turn leads to sexual stimulation. Because of their strong aroma and the increase in energy provided, spices excite sensorial perceptions....definitely worth trying!

#### Cinnamon (stick or powder form)

- Soak 20g of cinnamon in one litre of sweet wine for 10 days and drink two small glasses every day.
- Simmer 20g of cinnamon with a few cloves for 15-20 minutes in one litre of good red wine; sweeten with honey and drink one cup as desired.

#### Ginger

- Grate a good quantity of the fresh root, add to water and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Drink a small cup after meals. This improves digestion.

#### Cloves

- Mix a half a teaspoon powdered cloves with honey - use it like jam.
- Infuse 2-3 cloves in one cup of boiling water. Steep twenty minutes. Drink one to two cups per day.

#### Rosemary

- Steep one handful in boiling water. Drink 2-3 cups every day.
- Infuse 50g of leaves of leaves and branches in 1 litre of dry, white wine for 10 days. Drink 2-3 small glasses every day.

#### Savory

- Infuse one handful in boiling water; drink 3 cups per day.
- For very efficient results, pour 4-5 drops of savory essential oil on a piece of sugar. Take every day or as needed.

#### Chinese Herbs

- Ginseng and royal jelly are also aphrodisiacs and tonics. Available in Chinese herbal stores, ginseng is used in Chinese medicine to strengthen the elderly and must always be used carefully. Seek advice from the salesperson! (Ginseng is commonly used for men, and royal jelly for women.)

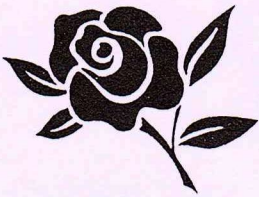
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# Self-Pleasure

*A journey of our beautiful, erotic and enjoyable bodies!*

By Brenda Kent

To give ourselves pleasure, we must first take time for ourselves. Women sometimes feel guilty for having 'downtime', but we need to in order to explore our sexuality, eroticize our bodies, and "surrender to the sweep of physical sensation and powerful emotions..." (2). The relationship we have with our bodies is the most intimate relationship we will ever have - let's enjoy this intimacy fully! So close the door, unplug the phone, get comfortable and enjoy the magic....

Did you know that our clitoris, which has the phenomenal capacity to push us over the edge of pleasure, is the only human organ whose sole purpose is to give us sexual pleasure? (1) When this little bulb of delight is stimulated (fingers, shower heads, vibrators, you name it) it gets filled with blood and stands up for more attention. Check it out - feel your clitoris - heck - grab a mirror and look at it! You may find that when you are aroused, your clitoris becomes so sensitive that direct stimulation is too much. Try to stimulate areas directly above, below, or beside it. Also, try a thick lubricant that adds slipperiness and provides a layer of thicker protection between your fingers and that sensitive pleasure bud.

As you become more aroused, your labia (vulva lips) swell and open up - they also become moist, red and juicy! The juiciness is due to glands located at the entrance of your vagina. These glands squirt, lubricating your vulva for some slippery sensations.

You may want to continue exploration into your vagina. You will probably find bumps and ridges there which make up the unique shape and texture of your vagina. Have you ever noticed how you can insert a dildo or fingers deeper into your vagina the more stimulated you become? Well, as you become aroused, your vagina elongates and your uterus and cervix rise upwards. More room for exploration!

Deeper inside your vagina, you may find the highly acclaimed "G-Spot". From now on, we will refer to that sensitive spot as "Aphrodite's Area". Why? I do not want Dr. Graffenburg (the man who 'discovered' this spot), or any other person claiming our body parts. Aphrodite's Area is the tissue that covers the paraurethral gland. When stimulated, it can be very pleasurable and lead to orgasm. Or it may not. Your anus is also a spot of potential pleasure. There are many nerve endings located around the outside and in your anus, so investigate this at your leisure. We all have unique bodies and unique sexual responses. Find out what works for you!

Your exploration may lead to orgasm - did you know that the pelvic floor muscles contract every 0.8 seconds during orgasm? (2) WOW! Sometimes a woman may experience a gush of fluid from her vagina during orgasm. This is totally natural and is sometimes called Divine Nectar (1). This nectar is made up of a variety of fluids from the reproductive system - it is our bodies responding FULL FORCE to pleasure. A gush of happiness!

Now for additional implements of self-pleasure, take a wander through your favorite erotica store. If you have never gone into one of these 'sex stores' before, I encourage you to find one you are comfortable with, push your comfort zones, and GO!

There are a great variety of 'toys' that can join you in your pleasure pool. Here are three :

Dildos - something to insert into your vagina to feel all of those delicious internal sensations - you can stimulate Aphrodite's Area if you wish.

Vibrators - plugged-in or charged with batteries, these wigglers-of-joy are wonderful for clitoral stimulation! Dildos can also be vibrators, packing a wallop of pleasure!

Lubricant - Don't skimp on the lube! Our vaginal walls are sensitive, so before you do too much heavy-duty thrusting or playing, make sure you are very slippery! Good lube will stay slippery for a long time. Try a silicone-based lube - they have no taste or scent and are very slippery! K-Y jelly is not meant to be a sexual lubricant and it does not stay slippery for very long at all. Check out your local pleasure store and choose the lube for you.

While you are at it, pick up a good piece of erotic literature and spend some quality time with yourself. YOU DESERVE IT!

1) *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, Christiane Northrup. Bantam Books; New York (1998)

2) *Women's Experience of Sex*, Sheila Kitzinger. Penguin Books; New York (1983)



Drawing by David Palladini, from: *Becoming Orgasmic*, Julia Heiman & Joseph Lopiccolo, Simon and Schuster; New York (1988).

## Natural Woman

*Canada's Natural Health and Lifestyle Journal*

# The Alphabet of Pleasure

Clair Prinsen

- A - Aspirations
- B - Bookstores
- C - Coffee
- D - Daylight Savings Time
- E - Entertaining
- F - Friends
- G - Games
- H - Health
- I - Ice Cream
- J - Jokes
- K - Kids
- L - Love
- M - Mountains
- N - Nurturing
- O - Orgasms
- P - Polar Fleece
- Q - Quiet
- R - Running
- S - Sisters
- T - Talking
- U - Union
- V - Vulva
- W - Women
- Y - Yoga
- Z - Zest

# The FEMALE Condom

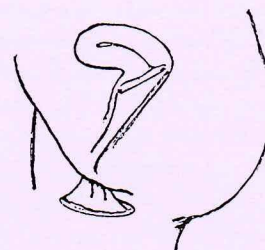
OK, women - here is another crazy device to keep birth control and safer sex in our hands. When I first laid eyes on this big, clumsy looking thing with rubber rings at both ends, I thought "What the heck is this?". I was both amused and intrigued at the same time.

So I did a bit of reading. It is made of polyurethane, not latex, so it may work well for people with latex sensitivity. You insert it into your vagina - the inside ring on the closed end fits loosely around your cervix and the outside ring on the open end dangles on the outside of your vagina. You have to be careful upon insertion as it is easy for the penis to accidentally go outside the condom unless it is guided into the ring.

It is much more expensive than the male condom (about \$4.50 each) and there is a higher failure rate - is it due to lack of compliance or that it is easier for the penis to slip out of the ring if you are not careful? I read that some people find it a bit goofy because of the sound it makes when 'in action'....slup-slup-slup.

Interestingly, the VWHC had an article in 1992 about the FC when it was starting to be used in Switzerland! Six years later and it has made it to Canada.

For this article (and to satisfy my own curiosity), one of our tried and true volunteers was asked to take the plunge and test out the Reality FC. Here are the results from 'Her' and 'Him'.



## Our Experience with "Reality Female Condom"

Her

*"I was really apprehensive because I thought it would be a lot more hassle than the diaphragm, but it is not. I would say that my highest anxiety was that I was worried about the ring not staying on the outside and we used A LOT of lube. Sensitivity was OK. I heard that there may be a funny noise during sex, but I didn't notice it. Overall, I think that once we got used to it, the Female Condom would be an alternative once in a while. I would still prefer using nothing at all, the diaphragm, or the male condom, in that order."*

Him

*"'Reality' turned out to be a satisfactory implement. More lubrication was required than any other contraceptive device that we have used, but this was not a significant problem. I would rate it as better than the male condom for pleasure. Although it is not as convenient in the beginning, it is more so in the end. Overall, I prefer it to the male condom, however this is based on only a single trial."*

So maybe we have another choice when it comes to birth control, safer sex, and finding PLEASURE. Want to try it out for yourself? We have a demo at the Info Centre for you to check out. If you want to purchase a female condom, Planned Parenthood (Suite 201 - 1001 West Broadway, 731-4252) has them for sale at a cheaper price than the drug store.

## Book Review

### Succulent Wild Women - Dancing with your wonder-full self

By SARK, Simon and Schuster, Fireside Publishing: New York (1997)

*"Succulent Wild Women are all around you. Look for the bright eyes, ready smile, and unusual clothes. Or perhaps it's a more shy succulent wild woman who dresses and appears more quiet, and then you get close enough to bask in her succulent glow."*

From Fears to Adventure to Healing to Sexuality, Fat, Money, Power, Creative Expression, Love.... SARK covers it all in this dynamic book. Incredibly colorful and hand-written, with side-notes in the margin, you are taking a journey through SARK's own journey of finding her Succulent-Self. You can't help but love your life as a woman - as a succulent, wild woman - after you take in her incredible words, drawings and ideas. She encourages us to love ourselves FIRST, accept our fears, admit our mistakes, embrace our uniqueness, and forge forward with passion, creativity and curiosity.

This book is FULL of Pleasure!

# Wimmin's View

*This is a forum for stories on women's personal journeys of healing. Your stories are welcome.*

## SEXUAL ABUSE IS A HEALTH ISSUE!

*Written by A.J. Gray*

Like millions of other people I am an incest survivor, and am on a lifetime journey of healing this horrible crime. I have learned as many have and are that sexual abuse is more than something that happened to you. In my case it was something that began happening to me when I was four years old and did not stop until I was twelve. It has yet to fully leave me because the emotional residue that still needs healing, continues to turn itself into physical health issues. A pattern which began as a child.

While growing up I suffered debilitating migraine headaches. It is not normal for children to have migraine headaches yet I had plenty. I remember clearly the feeling, the numbing of the hands and then bang, a full blown headache on one side of my head, usually the left side. Most often they would occur at school and my parents always said "Let her walk home the fresh air would do her good." I did not care about the fresh air, I was more concerned about whether my eight year old body would make it home, without wobbling into the street and getting hit by a car. It was not just migraines that attacked me as child, flu's stomach aches and a virus the doctors could not diagnose also found their way to me.

I ended up in the hospital for a week in a room by myself. My siblings were not allowed to visit me for the doctors feared they might catch it, whatever it was that I had. I did not care really. I did care that my stuffed animals were burned because they wanted to be sure this virus would not turn up again.

I believe now that the virus and all my other childhood illnesses were created by sexual abuse syndrome which the doctors had really no vested interest in diagnosing.

Ellen Bass and Laura Davis wrote in their popular and informative book [The Courage to Heal](#), "Although traditional doctors are sometimes sceptical about the emotional component of illness, too many people have experienced a direct correlation to ignore the potential benefits of emotional work as

physical health."

They also write that sexual abuse must heal on the physical level, meaning it must heal in the body itself. "Emotion begins as sensation and movement within the body and it is through the body we must relearn about trust intimacy and protection."

I believe that in order to relearn these things we must first heal our dis-ease in the body and de-program the negative impact the abuse has had on our mind. It is through our thought about ourselves and the emotional repercussions of abuse that create our dis-ease over and over throughout our lives.

To protect ourselves from the body we feel has betrayed us, we as abuse survivors learn at a young age to disassociate from it. It was not until my mid-twenties that I began to recognise that I had a body which was an integral part of my whole (body, mind spirit). I had been unaware all my life about how it felt to live in my body because at four years of age, I learned to leave it and live in my mind. I learned young to create a wonderful fantasy about a life of a child that I wanted to be. By doing this throughout my life, I repeatedly ignore any symptoms of sickness. When I was pregnant I did not become aware of it until I was past my sixth month!

Thought and emotion need a way to express themselves, if we cannot verbalise them then they will find their way out through our body. Thus creating the dis-ease. Talking to a counsellors, expressing yourself to people who listen to you are excellent ways to heal. Directing and releasing your emotions into creative outlets are also wonderful ways to heal and to self-discover. I have come to learn that massage, or any type of body work are also important gifts to give to yourself in order to release emotional residue that resides within the body.

In my late teens and early twenties I began to experience health problems related to my sexual organs. I had yeast infections, a bout of chlamydia and an infection in my uterus that was never diagnosed with a specific name. I did end up in the hospital twice for the same problem. Now close to thirty I have been diagnosed with cervical dysplasia and a wart on my cervix. Of course I was

told this cannot be cured, however I do not trust this. I believe for myself this has come into being because of my state of mind and unhealed anger related to my past. Louise Hay's book "You Can Heal Your Life" suggests that warts on the body parts are related to repressed or unresolved anger issues. Ellen Bass and Laura Davis go on to write "Sometimes an area of your body that was injured will develop problems later. You may also experience more subtle problems such as chronic tiredness, low resistance and susceptibility to colds and flu's." All these symptoms I have seen in myself and other abuse victims within my family of origin.

In some cases abuse victims can find themselves creating sickness because it is the only time we feel a sense of nurturing. When I was a child being sick was a sure fire way to get some attention. It was easy for me to carry this over into adulthood without consciously recognising it. Learning how to nurture yourself through finding out what you enjoy in life and spending less time worrying about the needs of others will help heal this legacy. For myself, creating through dance, writing, and my other gifts, as well enjoying the company of my son and my friends has helped me feel nurtured and loved, thus helping build my resistance to the colds and flu's that frequently ailed me when I was a child and young adult.

A friend mentioned she didn't think sexual abuse is something that goes away, it is something you (we) learn to cope with and deal with better as time goes on. Learning to cope is learning to understand how sexual abuse affects us mentally, spiritually, and physically. Thus working on healing ourselves on all these levels is the only way to truly overcome the societal impact of sexual abuse.

We have the power within our own minds to heal our bodies. We do not have to accept what anyone tells us about whether or not we can heal. The medical profession in most cases makes their assessments by a western methodology that holds little regard for the thousands of years old healing methods of the east. Eastern methods relate to healing all our being, meaning body mind and spirit. Make your decision around healing integrating all these parts. By asking questions and trusting your instincts I believe we all have the power to heal ourselves.

# Violence In the Health Care System

## *The Community Health Advocate Project*

*Confronting the barriers that women face in accessing safe, respectful and appropriate health care*

The VWHC Women's Health Information Centre is thrilled to announce the *partial* funding of the Women's Health Information Network (WHIN) program! The Community Health Advocate (CHA) project has been funded by the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. The second component of WHIN, which is still awaiting funding approval, is a Database of Health Care information in BC, women's health resources, and health practitioners.



*"Women with disabilities are considered asexual in our society. They do not get the same information about sexuality as able-bodied women."*

The CHA Program will increase awareness about the issue of violence against women in the health care system through a network of advocates working directly with women in various communities. CHAs will address the needs identified by the community in a way that best suits the women, the community partners, and CHAs. This program is true community-based advocacy.

*"When I told my doctor I am a lesbian, she became very uncomfortable. Then she told me I did not need a PAP smear because I am not sexually active [with men]."*

The CHAs will educate women about their rights in the health care system, empower them to take control of their health and, ultimately, feel confident during a visit to a health practitioner. Inner knowledge and a better understanding of rights will help reduce the disrespect and violence many women experience in the health care system.

*"...what is empty cell syndrome? Why can't my doctor tell me why I can not have children in words I can understand?"*

The CHAs will be vital links between the VWHC and the women of their communities. Selection of CHAs is happening NOW - if you know anyone who would be a great Advocate for women's health in your community, contact Brenda Kent for more information: 736-4234. Training of the CHAs will start in October!

It has been along struggle to secure funding for the Women's Health Information Network, but the CHA component is on the way! We are still working on securing funding for the health information database to complement the CHA program. The VWHC Women's Health Information Centre sends a big smile to Raine McKay, the former administrator, for her vision and dedication to this project!!

### Helping to Protect Women in Need

BC TEL has a program for low-income women at high risk of abuse who need a phone. Since the announcement of the cellular phone initiative in November, 1997, the ministry of Attorney General has received many calls from women requesting a free cell phone.

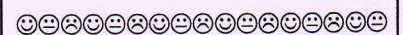
#### Criteria for application

A woman in need of access to a telephone due to her safety being at risk, and :

- has no existing credit
- does not have available funds for a security deposit
- does not have an outstanding closed account
- agrees to full toll restriction and no long-distance calling card

For information, contact: Leslie Perry-Whittingham  
BC TEL Credit Services  
Phone : 604-528-8769

### Calling All Readers



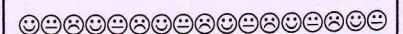
Infusion is seeking FEEDBACK and SUBMISSIONS. If you are literarily- or artistically-inclined and have work you'd like to submit, or if you'd simply like to share your views with us, feel free to contact the Newsletter:

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# Committee Happenings...

## Information Centre Report

Thanks to the enthusiasm of our volunteers, the Info Centre is swinging through summer with new ideas and projects on the go! We are currently in the process of mailing questionnaires to medical practitioners in the community. These questionnaires are intended to supplement the information already contained in the practitioner files by providing direct feedback regarding each doctor's practice and perspective towards health care.

As always, we are eager for new volunteers and new ideas. If you have time to help us out, please give us a call.

Volunteers are available at the Info Centre to show you around and help you find your own answers during the following hours :

Mon, Wed, Thursday 10:00am - 1:00pm

Wednesday 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Saturday 1:00pm - 4:00pm

*Call the Info Centre for Additional Hours*

## Hellos and Goodbyes!

The *Wild Wimmer* of the **VWHC Women's Health Information Centre** would like to recognize the following women for their commitment to our organization :

### Current Staff

- Caryn Duncan - Administrator
- Anna-Lisa Boye - Information Centre Coordinator
- Jennifer Koliak - Info Centre Cleaner
- Brenda Kent - Community Health Advocate Coordinator
- Elain Walkden - Summer Student (WHIN Coordinator)
- Candice Bennett - Summer Student (Computer Tech)

### Current Volunteers

- Lu Hansen
- Marion Smith
- Sharon Coates
- Sharon Lee
- Janet Ip
- Renee Fernandez
- Statia Michaels
- Erin Elliot
- Tamara Cowan
- Tamara Flick-Parker
- Lynda DeChief
- Anne Merrett-Hiley
- Brenda Kent
- Christine Campbell
- Twyla LaLonde
- Claar Prinsen
- Catherine Nelson-McDermott
- Kelli Forster
- Nina Tryggvason
- Jean Kang

### Past Staff - Thank you and all the best!

- Raine McKay - former Administrator
- Wendy Masui Palmbo - former Info Centre Coordinator
- Lorna Ketler - former Administrator
- Tracy-Anne Northey - Research Student 1997
- Lucia Walters - Summer Student 1997
- Nikki Nagy - Summer Student 1997

### Past Volunteers

- Zenovia Ursuliak
- Christa Brown
- Lorna Ketler
- Debra O
- Caitlin Cain
- Diane Rae Wenzy
- Nelli Harari

Special thanks to all the friends and partners of the volunteers for all their time and energy!!

## Abortion Peer Support Group

The VWHC Women's Health Information Centre runs a post-abortion support group every second and fourth Monday of each month. For more information, please call: 736-5262

### Welcome New Volunteers!

- Deb, Connie, Kristen, Cindy,
- Lynn, Nicola, Leah, Moira,
- Angela, Anastasia

## Administration & Budget Committee

We have all been working at a frantic pace this year to set up new administrative and budgeting practices. High on the list of priorities has been the re-evaluation and reduction of administrative costs. The result is the re-direction of resources to better serve the women who rely on the VWHC as a source for their health information. In addition to greeting our new fiscal year with a collectively-set budget in place, we have re-organized our collective space resulting in a silent auction for volunteers at our recent volunteer appreciation cabaret. As well, the collective has donated medical supplies and much needed but out-dated (from our perspective) computer equipment to a women's centre in Cuba. One of our volunteers and a Raging Grannie, Lucette Hansen, was involved in the recent July 4th rally at the Peace Arch to welcome a Canadian convoy of goods which will make its way across the US and into Mexico for shipment to Cuba. We are doing our bit to help Cubans cope with the shortages and difficulties caused by the US embargo. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped accomplish so much in the last 7 months!

## Education Committee

The Education Committee is committed to educating women on various aspects of women's health through in-house workshops, film/discussion nights and public presentations - both at the Collective and at your organization. If you have a health issue that you would like more information on or would like to try your hand at creating and presenting a workshop give us a call and leave a message for the Education Committee. Please refer to the insert of this newsletter for more information on the Women's Health Education available here!

All members are welcome to the:  
**VWHC Women's Health Information Centre**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
 Wednesday September 16, 1998  
 6 - 7pm Dinner, 7 - 10pm Meeting  
 (RSVP: 736-4234)

## Shiatsu Divine

Zen Shiatsu



- Acupressure Massage Therapy
- Stress Release •Body Revitalizing

**Vanessa Wiebel** B.Sc.

Certified Shiatsu Practitioner,  
Member of STA of BC.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective

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