

# Whistler SAFE Clinic

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Whistler SAFE Clinic?

The SAFE Clinic provides nonjudgmental, supportive and confidential sexual health services for people of all ages, with an emphasis on providing services for young people. Our objective is to help clients make informed reproductive health decisions that will work for them.

### When is the Whistler SAFE Clinic open?

Tuesdays 4:30-7:30 pm throughout the year; and most Thursdays 5:00-7:00 pm from December through April. Whistler SAFE Clinic staff are only available at these times.

### What services are available at the Whistler SAFE Clinic?

Whistler SAFE Clinic provides sexual and reproductive health care services and counseling:  
Contraception

- ✓ education and counseling about all methods of contraception
- ✓ prescription and provision of hormonal contraception, including pills, patch, ring, and injection
- ✓ IUD and barrier contraceptive supplies
- ✓ emergency contraception (Plan B; “morning after pill”)

Sexually transmitted infections

- ✓ STI examination, testing, treatment, client follow-up and anonymous partner notification
- ✓ HIV and syphilis testing, with pre-and post-test counseling
- ✓ Hepatitis B and C screening
- ✓ Hepatitis B immunization
- ✓ Prescription for Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination

Pregnancy Evaluation

- ✓ pregnancy testing and diagnosis
- ✓ pregnancy options counselling, including parenting, adoption and abortion information

Other reproductive health services

- ✓ pelvic/genital examinations
- ✓ cervical cytology screening (PAP testing)

NOTE: General medical services are NOT available at Whistler SAFE Clinic. Information about where to obtain other health care services can be found at the end of this FAQ.

### Is the Whistler SAFE Clinic free?

NO, [apart from Public health services \(see description below\)](#). If you have one, please have your MSP Care Card (or other Canadian provincial health care information) ready when you present to reception. If you *do not have* Canadian provincial health care coverage -

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*valid on the day you are seen in clinic* - there is a Clinic Fee. There are additional charges for some services. We will tell you about all SAFE Clinic charges up front.

### **What does it cost?**

Clinic Fee: \$30 per visit - NO charge *with* valid Canadian health-care insurance.

NOTE: In most cases your Canadian provincial health care insurance expires 3 months after your first visit to a doctor outside of your home province.

**ADDITIONAL fees** (*if service required*),

Cervical cytology screening (PAP testing): \$20 (*in addition to* \$30 Clinic Fee) - NO charge *with* valid BC MSP Care Card.

NOTE: Canadian provincial health care insurance does NOT cover the cost of PAP screening performed outside of the province in which you are insured.

Cryotherapy: \$10 per treatment (*in addition to* \$30 Clinic Fee)

Depo-Provera injection: \$45 each (*in addition to* \$30 Clinic Fee for initial visit; \$10 Clinic Fee for repeat injections).

Hormonal contraceptives (pill/patch/ring): \$15-\$20 per month. Requires a prescription.

Emergency Contraception (Plan B; “morning after pill”): \$20 - NO prescription necessary.

Home pregnancy test: \$3 per test (no additional fee if test done by nurse or doctor).

IUD: prices vary - please ask. Requires a prescription. We do not insert IUDs at SAFE, but can provide initial assessment.

### **No charge:**

- Return visit for RESULTS ONLY
- HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B & C testing, with pre- and post-test counseling
- Hepatitis B immunization
- Laboratory analysis for tests taken at Whistler SAFE Clinic
- Antibiotics for treatment of certain STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis)

### **Public Health Services:**

- HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B & C testing, with pre- and post-test counselling
- Routine and recommended immunizations
- Antibiotics for treatment of bacterial STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis)
- Testing and antibiotic treatment for sexual partners of a person with an STI.
- Sexual Health counseling and referral

### **Can I pay with a cheque, debit or credit card?**

No. Whistler SAFE Clinic accepts CASH ONLY payments.

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We do not provide services or supplies on credit. If you have trouble paying for the healthcare that you need, Whistler Community Services Society may be able to help - their contact information is at the end of this FAQ.

### **Where is the SAFE?**

SAFE is in the Whistler Health Care Centre, upstairs. The sign on the reception desk says “Vancouver Coastal Health”, because we occupy the Community Health offices after they are gone for the day. We also share their phone number: 604-932-3202

NOTE: We are *NOT HERE* to answer your calls outside of the usual SAFE Clinic hours.

### **Can I make an appointment at the SAFE Clinic?**

No. The SAFE Clinic provides “walk-in” services only. Please take a number and have a seat until your number is called. If the clinic is too busy to accommodate you today, or if you cannot wait, please see the attached list for other healthcare services that you can access. A nurse or physician can provide you with an absentee note if you have to miss work to attend clinic. Under certain circumstances the SAFE Clinic doctor or nurse may suggest a return visit for follow-up, and only then *may* recommended a specific time for *that* follow-up visit.

### **Why does it seem so busy just after 4:30 on Tuesdays?**

Prior to 4:30pm the offices are occupied by Vancouver Coastal Health, and there are no SAFE Clinic personnel available to help you until we have changed over. Our receptionist will announce when the SAFE Clinic has truly “opened”.

### **I arrived early, but there were no “numbers” available yet?**

Numbers are only given out when the Whistler SAFE Clinic receptionist is on duty - not before. She will announce when the clinic is open. Please have courtesy to allow people who arrived before you to take their place in the queue before you.

### **What are the different coloured numbers for?**

BLUE = results ONLY

YELLOW = everything else

### **Do I need to take a number to pick up contraceptive supplies?**

No. If you already have a SAFE Clinic prescription on file, you can go directly to the “Pill Room”. If the Pill Room isn’t open during SAFE, please queue up at the reception desk to purchase your contraceptive supplies.

You *do* need to take a number if: you require a new prescription, you want to fill a contraceptive prescription obtained from another clinic, you have no more refills left on your prescription, you want to change your contraceptive brand or type, you are due to have a blood pressure check, you want to see a SAFE Clinic healthcare provider for any other reason.

### **What is the “Pill Room”?**

This is SAFE’s mini-pharmacy, where you can purchase hormonal contraceptive supplies that *have already been prescribed to you* by a SAFE Clinic nurse or physician. You can also purchase home pregnancy tests and emergency contraception (Plan B) in the Pill Room *without* a prescription. Condoms and sexual health information handouts are available for

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free. Please see the SAFE Clinic receptionist to purchase supplies if you find the Pill Room closed during SAFE. Services of the Pill Room are only available during Whistler SAFE Clinic's usual operating hours.

### **Why might someone who arrived after me be “called in” before me?**

People come to SAFE for different reasons, require varying durations of care, and may need to see different care providers during their visit. Under certain circumstances a client may have been asked to return for follow-up at a pre-arranged time.

If you feel that you may have been skipped over, *please* bring your concern to the attention of the receptionist - she will check that your chart is in the correct sequence and queue.

### **It looks really busy tonight - will everyone be seen?**

Because Whistler SAFE Clinic has limited hours and limited staffing, we may not be able to provide all services to all people desiring our services on a given clinic evening. The SAFE Clinic receptionist will try to let you know in advance if the clinic is possibly already full. There is a list of other available healthcare services at the end of this FAQ, including free health information telephone services, counselling, and physician services.

### **While I'm here, can the doctor attend to my other *non-sexual* health concerns?**

NO. The Whistler SAFE Clinic operates under a specific mandate to provide reproductive healthcare services *only*. If you require other kinds of care or advice, you will need to obtain that care elsewhere. Physicians in Whistler and Pemberton are listed at the end of this FAQ. There is also a free non-emergency health information telephone service listed.

### **Who runs the Whistler SAFE Clinic?**

SAFE is operated by OPTions for Sexual Health (optbc.org) in cooperation with Whistler Community Health (Vancouver Coastal Health). Whistler SAFE Clinic is a not-for-profit service, and OPT is a registered charitable organization. Dedicated personnel you may encounter at the SAFE clinic are: receptionist; trained volunteers; registered nurses with additional certifications in contraceptive (birth control) and sexually transmitted infection (STI) management; a physician with expertise in sexual health.

### **What other health care resources are available?**

**Won't Get Weird:** 1-800-SEX-SENSE or 1-800-739-7367 or 604-731-7803 in the lower mainland (9am-9pm Monday-Friday). A FREE, non-judgmental, confidential and ANONYMOUS phone line staffed by registered nurses, sex experts and trained volunteers. They answer questions about sex, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy and pregnancy options including parenting, adoption and abortion information, sexual orientation, sexual assault and ANYTHING to do with sexuality.

**HealthLink BC:** call 8-1-1, or online at [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) for FREE access to non-emergency health information and services. Speak with a nurse about your symptoms, consult with a pharmacist about your medication questions..., find out about health resources and services you need, near you (any time, day or night).

### **Medical Clinics:**

Whistler Medical Clinic: 604-932-3977 - appointments & some walk-in  
201 - 4380 Lorimer Road, Whistler (beside the SAFE Clinic)

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Northlands Medical Clinic: 604-932-8362 - some same day appointments & walk-in  
101 - 4359 Main Street, Whistler

Town Plaza Medical Clinic: 604-905-7089 - walk-in  
40 - 4314 Main Street, Whistler

Pemberton Medical Clinic: 604-894-6454 - appointments & some walk-in  
1403 Portage Rd, Pemberton (in the Pemberton Health Centre)

Dr. A. HoChen: 604-894-6365 - appointments and walk-in  
1353 Aster Rd., Pemberton

Squamish physicians: please consult a telephone directory.

**Squamish SAFE Clinic**: 604-892-2293 ext. 600 – 5:00-7:00 Tuesdays - walk-in only (they don't have a receptionist; leave a voice message and they will return your call)

**Whistler Mental Health & Addictions**: 604-932-3202 (8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Friday)

If you are in crisis, call:

**Urgent Response Line**: 604-698-6455 (9:00am-10:00pm Monday-Friday), or the

**24-hour Crisis Centre Distress Line**: 1-866-661-3311

**Whistler Community Services Society**: 604-932-0113 or go to

<http://www.mywcss.org/programs> for a complete listing of WCSS programs, which include emergency financial assistance, the food bank, youth outreach, and much much more.