

Get Safe Spa Services

The variety of spa services available for consumers today continues to grow. Most services involve being touched by someone else's hands and using tools that can break the skin or be used on many different clients. If good infection control practices are not followed there is a risk for serious infections. It is important to understand the risks and take precautions to protect yourself. If you want to receive services, it's worth getting it done right. It's your body and your health.

What are the risks?

Blood-borne infections: If the equipment used is contaminated with blood from an infected person, you could get hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV.

Skin infections/ nail fungus: Bacteria thrive on the skin and fungus can infect nails. If tools are not properly cleaned and disinfected or thrown away between clients, you could get skin infections or get nail fungus from another infected client.

Be a smart consumer

- ✓ **Inspected Spa** – Make sure the spa is inspected by the Middlesex-London Health Unit.
- ✓ **Ask Questions** - Make sure the spa employee has made infection control a priority. Ask how tools are cleaned and disinfected. A good spa employee will gladly answer your questions.
- ✓ **Trust Your Instincts-** If you feel uncomfortable with anything you see or hear, do not be afraid to refuse the service. You have the right to make sure you are getting clean and safe service.

What to know before you go!

The following is some information for all spa services to help you know if you are protected while being pampered.

Environment

The spa service area should be clean and well organized.

Clean Hands

Make sure the spa employees wash their hands before providing any services.

Clean Linen

Make sure you are given clean sheets, towels and robes for your service. Paper bed liners are single use and must be changed between clients.

New needles, lancets, razor blades and credo blade (for pedicures)

All needles, lancets, razor blades and credo blades must be new and used on one client only. Needles and lancets must be sterile and the spa worker must open the sterile packaging in front of you. Never allow a previously used needle, lancet or blade to be used on you.

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Single Use Items vs. Multiple Use Items

Single: Tools that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected must be new for each client. Tools made with paper, wood and foam such as emery boards, sanding bands, orange wood sticks and sponges are single use and must be thrown away after each client.

Multiple: Tools that are made from metal, glass and plastic that touch your skin but do not actually break it, can be reused after they are properly cleaned and disinfected between clients. All tools must be in good repair and be stored covered.

No Double Dipping

Creams, lotions and waxes are used in a way to prevent “double dipping” or contamination of the original product. Roll-on wax cartridges are to be used on one client only and then thrown away.

Gun Control

Ear piercing guns are to be used on ear lobes only; they are not suitable for piercing any other body part.

After Care Instructions

If aftercare instructions are provided, follow these guidelines carefully. See your doctor if the area becomes infected.

When not to go!

Your skin is your number one defense against an infection from a spa service. If your skin is broken or irritated, you may be at a great risk of getting an infection.

Avoid getting a spa service on parts of your body where you have:

- A cut, tear or open wound
- A rash, irritation or infection
- A fungal infection of the nails

It is also recommended that you do not get a footbath treatment if you have recently shaved your legs.

Relax at your spa treatment knowing you have taken the steps to protect your health

For more information please contact the Infectious Disease Control Team at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330 or go to www.healthunit.com

Source:

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (2009). *Infection prevention and control best practices for personal services settings*. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/pubhealth/oph_standards/ophs/progstds/pdfs/pssp_2008.pdf

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