

## Questions & Answers about the Chiropodist Infection Control Lapse

Information for the media, public, Health Care providers, staff and Board of Health

August 2017

### General Questions

1. Which chiropody practice is affected?
  - Arsenault Foot Services
  - Address: 945 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave E, Unit 4C Owen Sound
  - Clinic staff also provide chiropody services at a satellite clinic at 672 Main St., Sauble Beach (adjacent to Sauble Family Health Team), as well as other non-clinical settings including in-home services.
2. What is a Chiropodist?
  - A Chiropodist (pronounced : 'ker-ro-po-dist') is a primary Health Care provider, described as a foot specialist, who provides a variety of medical services ranging from nail and skin care to orthotics and in-office surgeries.
3. What happened at this Chiropody clinic?
  - The Grey Bruce Health Unit (GBHU) received lab results for a client who tested positive for hepatitis B. The client reported that foot care was completed by Arsenault Foot Services, and during the procedure the client was cut.
  - Public Health completed an inspection of the premises on Wednesday, August 2, 2017. It was found that although the clinic was undertaking sterilization procedures, staff were not adhering to published best practice standards set out by the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC).
  - As a result, there is a low risk that some patients receiving services between **May 25 and June 8, 2017** may have been exposed to the hepatitis B virus.
4. What is the risk?
  - Some medical tools and instruments are reusable. After being used for a patient, these tools and instruments must be cleaned, disinfected and sterilized before being used for another patient.
  - There are specific standards to follow that specify how cleaning, disinfection and sterilization must take place in order to kill all organisms on these medical tools and instruments. (PIDAC Best Practice Documents: *Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice*; and, *Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment and Devices*).

- In this case, medical tools and instruments that were potentially exposed to the blood of one patient were not sterilized to the extent specified in the published standard.
  - This means there is a low risk that if one patient had a virus like hepatitis B, and the virus got on a tool or instrument, it could have survived the cleaning, disinfection and sterilization process (that was being used) and been passed on to the next patient to use the device.
  - We cannot estimate an individual's risk, but in general there is a low risk that some patients of the clinic may have been exposed to hepatitis B virus.
  - Public Health is recommending that all clients who had chiropody services (other than strictly orthotic services), **between May 25 to June 8, 2017**, get tested for hepatitis B.
5. Why is testing only recommended for people seen between May 25 and June 8, 2017?
    - Public Health Ontario recommends testing between May 25 and June 8, 2017 to determine a potential source of Hepatitis B infection and if there was transmission during this time.
    - As a result of this investigation, if the risk assessment changes to a higher level of risk, Public Health will provide further recommendations and communication.
  6. Why are we recommending testing for anyone who had chiropody services completed by this clinic/professional to speak with their Health Care provider about getting tested? Who is affected?
    - There is a low risk that clients who received chiropody services (other than strictly orthotic services) from this clinic and/or at other sites during May 25 and June 8, 2017, may have been exposed to hepatitis B.
  7. Why am I not being tested for other blood borne pathogens?
    - For this specific communicable disease and IPAC lapse investigation, only hepatitis B testing is recommended to acquire more information on potential source of infection and to determine if transmission occurred further to the case identified.
    - As a result of this investigation, if the risk assessment changes to a higher level of risk, Public Health will provide further recommendations and communication.
  8. Do area Health Care providers know about this?
    - An advisory went to all local Health Care providers on August 22, 2017.

## Testing

9. I attended this office between May 25 and June 8, 2017 and want to get tested.

- Speak to your Health Care provider or call 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 1650 to speak to someone at Public Health about your situation.

10. Where and how do I get tested?

- Public Health recommends people meeting one of the above criteria be tested for hepatitis B virus.
- Speak to your Health Care provider about getting tested or call 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 press 1650 to speak with a Public Health Nurse about your situation.

11. If I have already been vaccinated against hepatitis B, do I still need to get tested?

- Yes, we recommend you still get tested.

12. How much does the test cost?

- Testing is free.

13. Are the tests confidential?

- Yes. Results will be shared with your Primary Health Care provider and Public Health.

14. How will I get my results? How long until I get the results?

- Test results will go to your Health Care provider who ordered the testing.
- Test results should arrive in two weeks.
- Your Health Care provider will call you if the results indicate a concern.

15. What if my result is positive?

- If your result is positive, your Health Care provider will tell you what to do next for further testing, treatment and follow-up.
- Public Health will also be alerted and will follow-up with you.

16. Why are Health Care providers being told to test at 3 months and then again at 6 months since the person's last exposure?

- Some infections take longer to show up.
- Recommendations are for persons to be tested at 3 months since last exposure date, and repeat testing at 6 months after last exposure.

17. If I think I was exposed, is there treatment I can take (prophylaxis) to prevent a hepatitis B infection?

- Prophylaxis is effective up to 7 days after exposure (ideally within 48 hours), after 7 days, it is no longer effective.

18. At what age is the hepatitis B vaccine publicly funded? And if an individual is not eligible what is the cost of the vaccine?
- You should speak with your Health Care provider about getting the hepatitis B vaccine and he or she will ensure you get the right dose at the right time.
  - Hepatitis B vaccine is publicly funded when provided to students in Grade 7.
  - The hepatitis B vaccine is also publicly funded if you meet certain risk factors (drug user, multiple sex partners, immigration from a country where the disease is endemic.) Otherwise, there is a fee to get a vaccine dose and up to three doses may be necessary depending on your age (generally, about \$35.00 a dose).
19. What if I don't have a Primary Health Care provider or they won't see me for this?
- You can go to a walk-in clinic.
  - You can call Grey Bruce Health Unit at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 press 1650 to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

### Regulatory and Legislation Questions

20. Have any outside agencies been notified?
- Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
  - Public Health Ontario
  - The Ontario College of Chiropractors
21. How and when did GBHU find out about the lapse?
- A sporadic communicable disease investigation led to a Public Health inspection of the premises on August 2, 2017. The inspection determined that the reprocessing of reusable instruments did not meet the required standards.
22. What is Public Health's role in this IPAC Lapse investigation?
- An investigation is designed to prevent and manage infectious diseases and minimize the risk of transmission of infections.
  - Public Health follows provincial protocols that specify how to investigate and follow up infection control complaints. (Ontario Public Health Standards, Infection Prevention and Control Practices Complaint Protocol under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*).
  - When Public Health receives a complaint or as a result of communicable disease surveillance, Public Health will conduct an unannounced inspection to determine if there has been a lapse in infection control practices.
  - Public Health inspects regulated health professionals when there is an infection control complaint, or as a result of communicable disease surveillance. Inspection could include:

- Interviewing staff
- Watching staff perform infection control measures
- Reviewing documentation
- Examining equipment
- Comparing office practices to manufacturer's instructions for cleaning, disinfection and sterilization
- When a lapse is identified, reports are posted on the GBHU website.

23. Why is Public Health singling out this one Chiropodist practice?

- Public Health investigates premises based on the assessment of a complaint or referral, or as a result of communicable disease surveillance.
- Public Health is not mandated to perform routine inspections of regulated health professionals.

24. Have the problems been fixed?

- Since the initiation of this investigation, the clinic has ceased to operate. Therefore, the completion of corrective measures is no longer applicable.

25. I still have questions. Who can I speak to?

- You can call Grey Bruce Health Unit at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 press 1650 to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

## Relevant Links

### Public Health

- Immunization: <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Immunization>
- IPAC Complaints: <http://healthspace.ca/Clients/Ontario/GreyBruce/web.nsf>

### Testing

- Find a LifeLabs location: <http://locations.lifelabs.com/>

### Information on Hepatitis B:

- Canadian Liver Foundation / Hepatitis B: [http://www.liver.ca/liver-disease/types/viral\\_hepatitis/Hepatitis\\_B.aspx](http://www.liver.ca/liver-disease/types/viral_hepatitis/Hepatitis_B.aspx)
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care / Hepatitis B: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/hepatitis/hep\\_b.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/hepatitis/hep_b.aspx)
- Sanguen Health Centre (Guelph): <http://sanguen.com/>

### For Healthcare Providers

- Best Practice Document, *Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice* (Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee, April 2015)

[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/IPAC\\_Clinical\\_Office\\_Practice\\_2013.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/IPAC_Clinical_Office_Practice_2013.pdf)

- Best Practice Document, *Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Medical Equipment/Devices In All Health Care Settings* (Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, May 2013)  
[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC\\_Cleaning\\_Disinfection\\_and\\_Sterilization\\_2013.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC_Cleaning_Disinfection_and_Sterilization_2013.pdf)
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Infection prevention and control practices complaint protocol, 2015. Available from:  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph\\_standards/docs/infection\\_prevention\\_complaint.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/infection_prevention_complaint.pdf)