

# Be Spa Safe

Your guide to PROTECTING yourself at the spa

## Spa health risks

What you need to know

Tips to reduce your risk of infection

## Does your SPA pass the test?

Know what to look for with five easy checklists



Algoma  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
Santé publique Algoma





# Spa health risks:

## What you need to know\*

Many of us go to the spa to relax and get pampered. And most spas work hard to make sure their clients enjoy a safe service. However, there are many ways that *serious infections* can be spread at the spa if proper steps to clean and disinfect are not taken. **These infections include Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, skin and nail fungus.**

## About this guide

York Region public health developed the **Be Spa Safe** guide to explain how infections can spread during spa services and what you can do to reduce your risk. It includes five easy checklists of things to look for before you receive a manicure, pedicure, facial, waxing or hairdressing service. It also gives tips on when to avoid spa services to protect yourself and others. Be sure to review the checklists before each visit to the spa.

## Be Spa Safe.

\*In this guide, the term 'spa' includes businesses that offer many services (such as manicures, pedicures, waxing, facials, etc.), as well as ones that offer fewer services such as hair or nail salons.

# *What you need to know about....*

## **How infections can spread**

Spas serve many clients every day and some of these clients carry infections that they bring into the spa. Germs that cause infections can be spread when an infected client's skin, blood or body fluid comes into contact with a spa worker's hands, spa tools or work surfaces used during a service.

If a spa worker's hands are not properly washed, and if spa tools and work surfaces are not properly cleaned and disinfected between each client, they can spread germs to another client by:

- touching the client's skin directly and/or
- touching a cut, tear or open wound on the client's skin

## **When to avoid spa services**

Your skin is your first defence against infection. When it is broken, irritated or infected, your risk of getting an infection increases. For this reason, we recommend that you avoid getting a spa service on the parts of your body where you have:

- a cut, tear or open wound
- a rash or skin infection
- irritated or severely dry, chapped skin

***We also recommend that you avoid getting a pedicure if you have just shaved your legs.***

# Spa tools

Many different tools are used at the spa. Some tools are *single use*, which means they must be used on **one client only** and then thrown away. This is because these tools cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use. Other tools are *reusable* but **must be cleaned and disinfected** between each client.

## Cleaning and disinfection

For tools and work surfaces to be properly cleaned and disinfected, they must first be cleaned with *water and detergent* to remove dirt and debris. Next, they must be treated with a chemical solution called a *disinfectant* to kill germs that cause infection.

Different tools need to be treated with different levels of disinfectant. For example, tools that come into contact with blood or body fluids must be treated with a higher level of disinfectant or be *sterilized*.

*Learn how different spa tools need to be treated in the checklists.*



# Steps to protect yourself

## Know what to look for

Read the *Be Spa Safe* checklists before you receive a spa service. They list what you should look for at the spa to reduce your risk of infection.

## Look around and ask questions

Once you know what to look for, take time to observe spa practices and ask the staff any questions you may have. You can do this when you go to make an in-person appointment, while you wait for your service and even during the service itself. This can also help to build trust with your spa, making your experience more enjoyable.

## Make an informed decision

If you are uncomfortable with what you see or hear, don't be afraid to refuse the service if necessary. You have the right to make sure you receive a safe service that is given with clean tools and clean hands.



Arriving early  
for your  
appointment  
may help  
you to see  
how tools  
and work  
surfaces are  
cleaned and  
disinfected at  
the end of the  
last client's  
service.

### General Checklist for ALL Spa Services

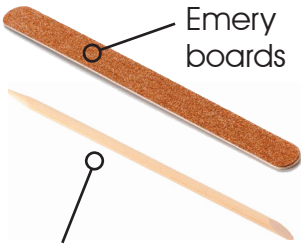
- ✓ The spa operates in a public location inspected by Algoma Public Health
- ✓ All work areas are well lit, clean and organized
- ✓ Tools, work surfaces and equipment are in good repair (for example no rust, cracks, etc.)
- ✓ Spa workers wash their hands before and after each client
- ✓ Tools and supplies are stored in a clean area (for example in covered containers)
- ✓ Creams and lotions are used in a way that does not contaminate the original product (for example used in a pump, no fingers in jars)
- ✓ Clean sheets, towels, robes, etc. are used for each client. Paper liners are thrown out after each use



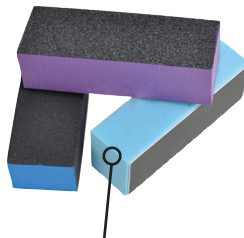
***The checklists that follow outline more things to look for and are categorized by specific spa services.***

### Checklist for Manicure, Pedicure and Nail Treatment Services

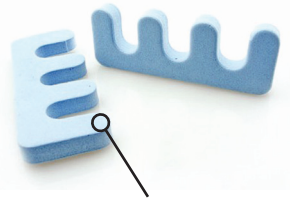
- ✓ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ✓ The client's hands are washed before service
- ✓ The client's nails are checked for signs of nail mould/fungus. If found, service is refused
- ✓ These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:



Wooden cuticle pushers



Nail buffers

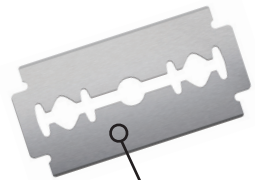


Foam toe separators



Paper slippers

Sanding bands



Pedicure razor blades

*Don't be afraid to ask for new ones before your service*





These items are cleaned and disinfected between each client:

Nail clippers



Nippers



Metal nail drill bits



Foot paddles



Acrylic nail brushes



Glass and diamond nail files



Hand baths



Foot baths



***Don't be afraid to ask if and how these items are cleaned and disinfected before your service***

service if these safety practices are not followed.

### Checklist for Waxing Services

- ✓ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ✓ The spa worker uses gloves during service
- ✓ Applicators (for example wooden sticks) are never dipped back into the original pot of wax once they have touched the client's skin — “no double dipping”
- ✓ Used wax is thrown away — it is never reused
- ✓ These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:



*Don't be afraid to ask for new ones before your service*



These items are cleaned and disinfected between each client:



## No double dipping

The temperature of heated wax is not hot enough to kill bacteria from skin. That is why the same applicator that touches a client's skin should never be dipped back into the original pot of wax.

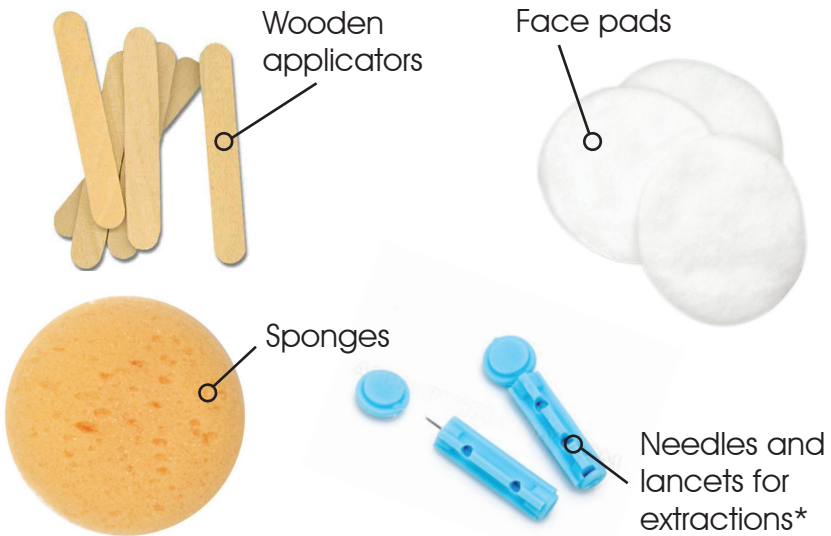


***Don't be afraid to ask if and how these items are cleaned and disinfected before your service***

service if these safety practices are not followed.

### Checklist for Facial Services

- ✓ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ✓ The spa worker wears gloves when there is a chance that the skin may be broken. (For example during pimple or blackhead removal)
- ✓ Water in the facial steam vapour machine is changed daily
- ✓ These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:

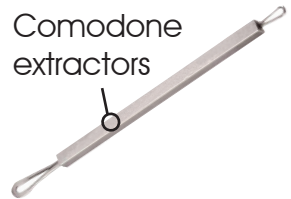
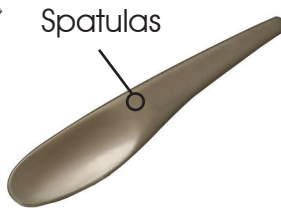
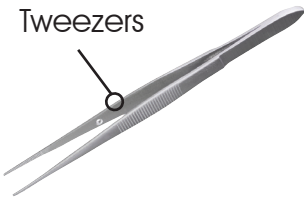
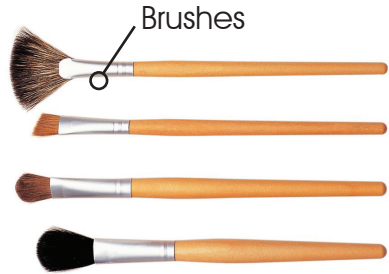


*Don't be afraid to ask for new ones before your service*





These items are cleaned and disinfected or sterilized as required, between each client:



## \*Needles and lancets

used for extractions must be in sterile packaging and be opened in front of the client. They must be thrown into a sharps container immediately after each use.

### TIP

Contact with blood and body fluid is common during facial services. This is why it is so important that your spa worker wears gloves as required.



*Don't be afraid to ask if and how these items are cleaned and disinfected before your service*

service if these safety practices are not followed.

### Checklist for Hairdressing Services

- ✓ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ✓ Capes and gowns are clean
- ✓ New neck strips or clean towels are used on each client
- ✓ These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:

Foil strips

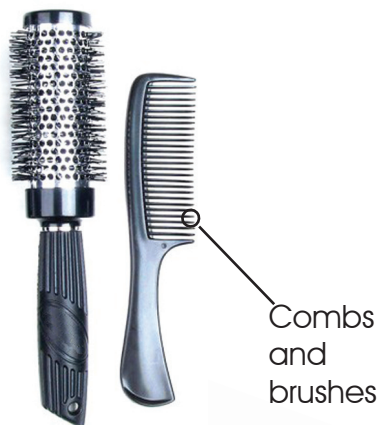


#### **\*Single-use razors**

are thrown away immediately into a sharps container after each use.

*Don't be afraid to ask for new ones before your service*

✓ These items are cleaned between each client:



✓ These items are cleaned and disinfected between each client:



***Don't be afraid to ask if and how these items are cleaned and disinfected before your service***

service if these safety practices are not followed.



# Are spas inspected by public health?

Algoma Public Health inspectors  
inspect spas at least once a year to:

- Make sure spas follow proper steps to reduce the risk of infection to clients during services
- Educate spa owners and workers on best practice requirements
- Respond to consumer complaints

---

## Buyer beware:

- Spas that operate out of a private home are not inspected by Algoma Public Health. For your protection, we recommend that you choose a spa that is inspected.

---

## *Be Spa Safe.*

For more information on how to  
protect yourself at the spa:

[www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com)

705-942-4646 TF: 866-892-0172