



Skin Penetration

Advice for the Beauty Therapy Industry

Environmental Health Guide

The following information has been developed to assist the beauty therapy industry with questions relating to skin penetration. This information is to be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for Skin Penetration Procedures.

Health risks associated with the beauty therapy industry

There are a number of health risks associated with the beauty therapy industry, including;

- Viral infections (hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS)
- Bacterial infections (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Staphylococcus epidermidis*)
- Fungal infections (*Candida albicans*).

Reuse of depilatory wax (*semi-critical procedure*)

Body hair can accumulate microorganisms on the skin. Removing hair with the use of wax also removes these microorganisms, contaminating the wax as a result of this process.

Simply melting down the wax does not destroy these micro-organisms and the reuse of this wax could lead to the transmission of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. It is also important to remember that blood may be extracted during the waxing process, and not all blood extraction will be visible.

It is recommended that wax is single use and disposed of after each use on a client.

If wax is to be reused between clients the wax must be **thermally disinfected**. The process of thermal disinfection involves heating the wax to a temperature of at least 130°C for a minimum of 20 minutes. At this temperature and time period it is unlikely that microorganisms will survive this form of heat treatment.

When thermally disinfecting used wax the temperature should be monitored properly with the use of a thermometer which is able to withstand high temperatures. If the process of

thermal disinfection is not followed properly disease causing microorganisms may survive in the wax and increase the risk of cross contamination to the client.

It is recommended that hair is strained from the reused wax prior to thermal disinfection. All reused wax must be stored and heated in a separate container from any unused wax.

If the process of thermal disinfection is not followed wax must be single use and disposed of after use on each client.

The importance of separating unused wax and used wax (*semi-critical procedure*)

It is important to separate unused wax from wax to be used on a client. This will prevent the cross contamination of microorganisms from a clients skin to the unused wax stock.

In order to do this waxes shall be poured or removed from stock using a new clean spatula or ladle and placed into a clean container prior to each client treatment. If more wax is required a new spatula shall be used. (A new ladle is not required providing the ladle does not come into contact with any material that is in use on the client.) Disposable spatulas and containers shall be discarded into an appropriate waste receptacle after use. Reusable containers shall be cleaned and disinfected between each client.

Any wooden spatulas used for applying strip wax must be disposed of after use on each client. If metal spatulas are used they must be cleaned and disinfected between each client.



Roll-on wax (*semi-critical procedure*)

There are a number of roll-on wax products on the market where wax is stored in a container and then rolled onto the skin via roller heads. The wax which is rolled onto the skin tends to re-circulate back into the container and can re-contaminate the unused wax. Therefore once this product is used on one client the wax in the container must be thermally disinfected before it can be used on a second client (unless the product manufacturer can prove to the Department of Health that the wax in the container will not be contaminated). The roller head and the container must also be cleaned and then disinfected after each use on a client. This will remove any used wax residue and other micro-organisms.

Advice for clients after waxing

After waxing the pores in the skin may be open for up to 48 hours after, making the skin more sensitive to ultraviolet light. It is recommended that clients who have had waxing done should be advised not to do any of the following until 48 hours after the procedure;

- Sunbathe
- Have a solarium treatment

Electrolysis (*critical procedure*)

During the electrolysis hair removal procedure, the needle enters the skin surrounding the hair follicle which may result in the contamination of the needle with small amounts of blood and body substances. The transmission of blood borne infections is then possible.

Only **single use** electrolysis needles are permitted.

Only sterile needles are to be inserted into the electrolysis equipment at the start of the treatment. The same needle can be used for removing as many hairs necessary from one client at a single session.

Used needles must be disposed of into a sharps container upon completion of the procedure. The needle used for one client can not be stored and then used again for the same client at following electrolysis sessions. A sterile needle **must** be used for each treatment session.

It is essential that the operator's hands are thoroughly washed before and after this process, and gloves are worn.

Lancing skin (*critical procedure*)

Lancing of the skin involves treatments such as the removal of blackheads, pimples and ingrown hairs, by penetrating the skin using sharp equipment called a lance. Sterile **single use** equipment must be used for this process.

Tweezing (*semi-critical procedure*)

Tweezers shall be rinsed off with warm water, immersed in detergent and water and scrubbed under water with a clean scrubbing brush after each use by a client. Where tweezers become contaminated with blood or body fluids they should be cleaned and disinfected between clients in accordance with the Code of Practice.



Pedicures (*semi-critical procedure*)

During a pedicure treatment it is possible to contract a fungal, bacterial or viral infection from dirty tools and equipment.

Equipment used for rasping of corns and callouses on feet should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Code of Practice after each use on a client.

It is recommended that disposable files are used on each client and then discarded, or they must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Code. All metal instruments should be clean and disinfected in accordance with the Code.

There have been cases of bacterial infections associated with whirlpool foot spas that were not sufficiently cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. If foot spas are used in the salon they need to be drained, cleaned and disinfected between each client.

The intake filter of the foot bath should be cleaned with detergent, and then soaked in disinfectant at least once a week.

Note: Clients feet should be washed prior to a pedicure.



Manicuring (semi-critical procedure)

Fungal, viral and bacterial infections are transferable through manicure treatments. It is very easy to cut a clients skin when cutting cuticles or break the skin if you file too deeply. For this reason it is recommended that all instruments are single use and disposed of immediately after use, or they must be suitably cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Code of Practice.



Any instrument, such as cuticle clippers, that may have been contaminated with blood or other body fluids must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Code of Practice. It is recommended that clients with visible nail or skin infections should be referred to a medical practitioner prior to undertaking a manicure or pedicure. Note: Clients should wash their hands prior to a manicure.

Cosmetic Tattooing (critical procedure)

Cosmetic tattooing, also referred to as micropigmentation, pigment implants, semi permanent creations, permanent makeup, or derm-impigmentation, all involve the same processes as a standard tattooing procedure. Therefore, cosmetic tattooing must be performed in accordance with the Code of Practice, particularly in relation to **sterilisation** of appliances.

The needle chamber from the permanent cosmetic machines should be capable of being detached from the unit to enable thorough cleaning and sterilisation.

Note: It is an offence under section 103 of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*, for a person, in any manner, to tattoo or brand any part of the body of a child unless the person has obtained the written consent of a parent of the child. The maximum penalty will be \$12 000 and imprisonment for one year.

For further details contact the Department for Community Development, Office for Children and Youth, Ph (08) 9476 2000.

Creams, powders or ointments

The most effective way to dispense ointments is the use of self dispensing pump packs. This prevents the cross contamination of the ointment.

When refilling containers with pump packs, the self dispensing pump should be cleaned before refilling the container.

To avoid cross contamination, any products contained in a tub, such as makeup, powder, cream etc, should be removed from the stock by using a clean single use applicator. The same applicator should not be used on a second client or dipped back into the original container. After removal from a container, any extra cream or ointment should be disposed of and **not** returned to the original container.

Ultraviolet light cabinets

Ultraviolet (UV) cabinets **do not** sterilise equipment. UV light does not penetrate to all surfaces of the appliances exposed and some viruses, including HIV, can still survive. Note: Microwave ovens, pressure cookers, incubators, boiling water units, ultrasonic cleaners and other similar appliances also do not sterilise appliances. Wiping equipment with disinfectants does not sterilise the item either.

Disposal of sharps and contaminated waste - local government

It is important to contact your local government environmental health officer to discuss the disposal of contaminated wastes and sharps in your local area.

Mobile Beauty Therapists

Mobile beauty therapists which conduct skin penetration procedures are not permitted, unless every place where the procedure is undertaken is registered with the local government, and the operator complies fully with the Code of Practice.

Health inspections of Beauty Salons

As part of the *Health (Skin Penetration Procedures) Regulations 1998*, the owner of an establishment where skin penetration procedures are performed is required to notify the local



government of the name and address of the establishment.

The owner of a beauty salon is required to notify the local government of the whereabouts of the business. It is the responsibility of the local government Environmental Health Officer to conduct inspections of these premises to ensure that the owner and employees are complying with the Code of Practice for Skin Penetration Procedures.

An owner of an establishment who does not ensure that the establishment complies with the Code of Practice commits an offence, and may face penalties under the Regulations.

Occupational Health and Safety

All enquiries relating to occupational health and safety should be referred to WorkSafe Western Australia. Contact the WorkSafe information line on 1300 307 877.

Further information

For more information contact your local government Environmental Health Officer or the Environmental Health Directorate on 9388 4999.

CASE STUDY

In California during September 2000, 110 customers of a beauty salon were identified to have persistent boils on their lower legs, caused by a bacteria called *Mycobacterium fortuitm*. All customers noted that they had a pedicure at the same salon which involved the use of a whirlpool foot spa.

Cultures were taken from all 10 footbaths at the salon, with *Mycobacterium fortuitm* being found in three of the footbaths. Many of the clients were left with disfiguring scars on their legs. The footbaths were not readily cleaned and disinfected between each client which allowed the bacteria to grow.

The Californian Health Department closed the premises down.

Produced by Environmental Health Directorate
© Department of Health, Western Australia 2006