

# 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 six  
easy checklists



# Spa health risks:

## *What you need to know*

Many of us go to the spa\* to relax and get pampered. 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 prevent infections are not taken. **These infections include Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and skin and nail fungus.**

## *About this guide*

The *Be Spa Safe* guide was developed to explain how infections can spread during spa services and what you can do to reduce your risk. It reviews York Region's role to inspect spas and explains how you can check the latest inspection reports of your favourite places before you go. It also includes six easy checklists of things to look for before you receive a manicure, pedicure, facial, waxing, hairdressing or ear piercing. Be sure to review the checklists before your next visit to the spa.

## *Be Spa Safe*

\*In this guide, the term 'spa' includes businesses that offer services such as manicures, pedicures, waxing, facials, ear piercing, and hair and barbering services.

# What you need to know about....

## *The spa industry*

Spas in York Region are not licensed by York Region Public Health. While spa owners, operators and workers may have training on how to prevent infections, this type of training is not legally required to own, operate or work in a spa. It is important for clients to know what to look for at the spa to protect themselves.

## *York Region's role*

### *We inspect spas*

Public health inspectors inspect spas to:

- Make sure spas follow proper steps to reduce the risk of infection to clients during services
- Respond to client concerns and complaints

### *We provide training*

York Region provides spa owners, operators and workers voluntary training on how to prevent infections at the spa. Participants are given a *Certificate of Attendance* by York Region. Look for this certificate at your spa.



## Tip:

Spas that operate out of a private home may not be inspected by York Region Public Health. For your protection, we recommend that you choose a spa that is inspected.





# What you need to know about....

## *How infections can spread*

Spas serve many clients every day, some of whom carry germs 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, tools or work surfaces during service.

If a spa worker's hands are not properly washed, and if tools and work surfaces are not properly cleaned and disinfected after each client, germs that cause infection can spread. Germs spread by touching:

- the client's skin directly
- 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

**Tip:** Avoid getting a pedicure if you have just shaved your legs.



## Spa tools

Not all spa tools should be treated the same way. Some tools are to 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 can be used more than once, but must be **cleaned and disinfected** between each client.

Review the checklists in this guide to see which tools need to be thrown away and which can be re-used.

## Cleaning and disinfection

Proper cleaning and disinfection is important to kill germs that cause infections. 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.

Bleach, alcohol and Barbicide are examples of disinfectants that are commonly used at the spa.

**Tip:** Tools that break the skin and come into contact with blood or body fluids must be treated with a higher level of disinfectant or be sterilized.





## Tip:

Look around  
and see  
how tools  
and work  
spaces are  
cleaned and  
disinfected.

Don't be  
afraid to  
refuse  
services.

# Five steps to

## 1. Check before you go

Check YorkSafe, York Region's inspection reporting system, before you go to the spa. Use it to:

- Check that your spa is inspected by York Region Public Health
- Check the results of your spa's latest health inspection report

### There are four easy ways to check:

- 1) Visit [york.ca/yorksafes](http://york.ca/yorksafes)
- 2) Call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY: 1-866-252-9933
- 3) Scan the QR code found on the Proof of Public Health Inspection sign at the spa with your mobile phone or device
- 4) Scan the QR code here



## 2. Know what to look for

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



# protect yourself

## *3. Look around and ask questions*

While at the spa, 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.

## *4. Make an informed decision*

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

## *5. Report concerns or complaints*

You can help to prevent the spread of serious infections at the spa. If you are concerned about a spa's cleaning and disinfection practices, you can contact York Region Public Health by calling York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653. York Region public health inspectors will investigate. All concerns and complaints are kept confidential.



# Be Spa Safe Checklist

## General Checklist for ALL Spa Services

☒ The spa operates in a public location inspected by York Region Public Health

☒ A green *Proof of Public Health Inspection* sign is posted at the spa



☒ All work areas are well lit, clean and organized

☒ Tools, work surfaces and equipment are in good repair (for example: no rust, cracks, etc.)

☒ Tools, equipment and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between each client



REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during

- ☒ Single-use items are thrown away between 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
- ☒ Spa workers wash their hands before and after each client



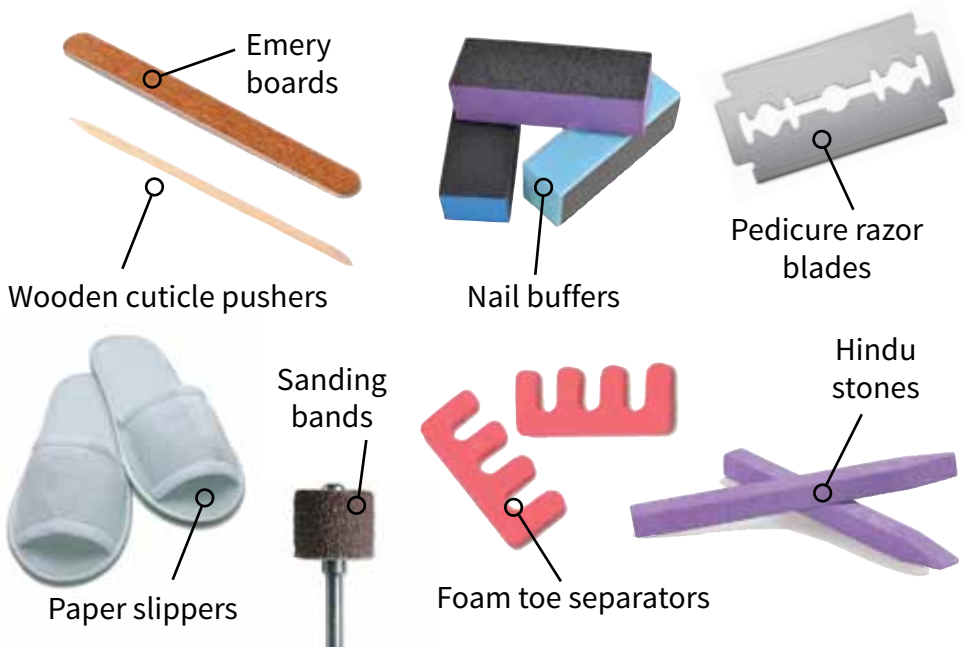
*The checklists that follow outline more things to look for before and during specific spa services.*

service if these safety practices are not followed.

# Be Spa Safe Checklist

for Manicure, Pedicure and Nail Treatment Services

- ☒ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ☒ The client's hands and feet 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:**



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

REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during



**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

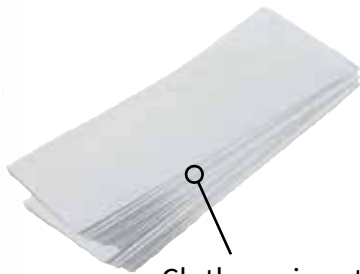
service if these safety practices are not followed.

# Be Spa Safe Checklist

## for Waxing Services

- ☒ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ☒ The client's skin is checked for open cuts or wounds and signs of infection. If found, service is refused
- ☒ The spa worker wears disposable gloves on both hands during service
- ☒ **These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:**

Cotton pads to apply cream and lotion



Cloth waxing strips

Roll-on wax



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

REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during





## Pots of wax

The temperature of heated wax is not hot enough to kill germs on the skin. Applicators (e.g., wooden sticks) used for waxing that touch the skin should *never* be dipped back into the original pot of wax. **No double dipping!**

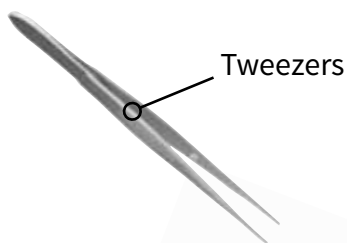


## Roll-on wax

When wax is rolled directly onto the skin, germs from the skin can contaminate the wax left over in the cartridge. In this case, a new wax cartridge must be used between each client to prevent the spread of germs.



**These items are cleaned and disinfected between each client:**

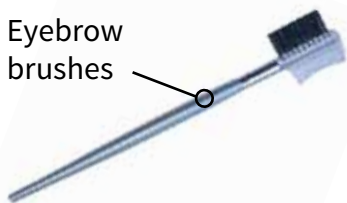


Tweezers

Scissors



Eyebrow brushes



**Tip:** Contact with blood and body fluid is common during waxing service. It is important that your spa worker wears gloves.

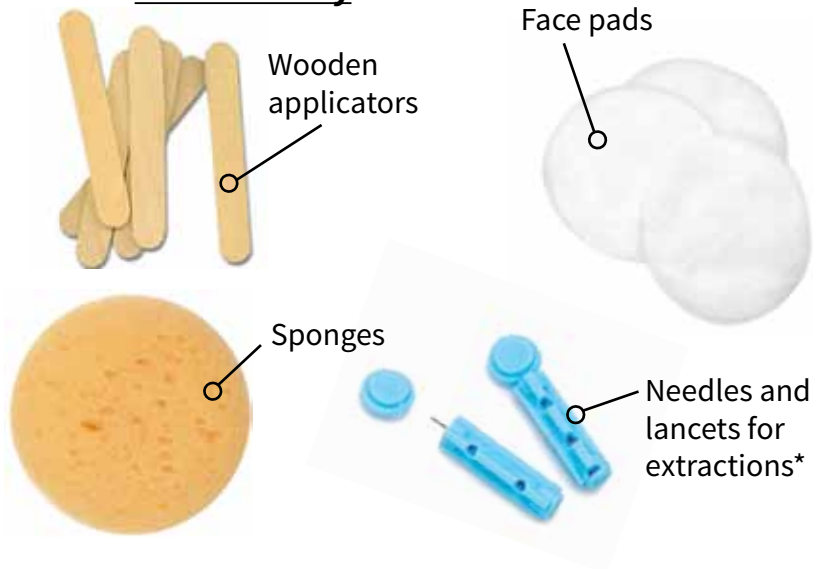
Don't be afraid to ask if and how these items are **cleaned and disinfected** before your service

service if these safety practices are not followed.

# Be Spa Safe Checklist

## for Facial Services

- ☒ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ☒ The client's skin is checked for open cuts or wounds and signs of infection. If found, service is refused
- ☒ The spa worker wears disposable gloves on both hands during removal of pimples, black heads and in grown hair
- ☒ Water in the facial steamer is changed daily
- ☒ **These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:**



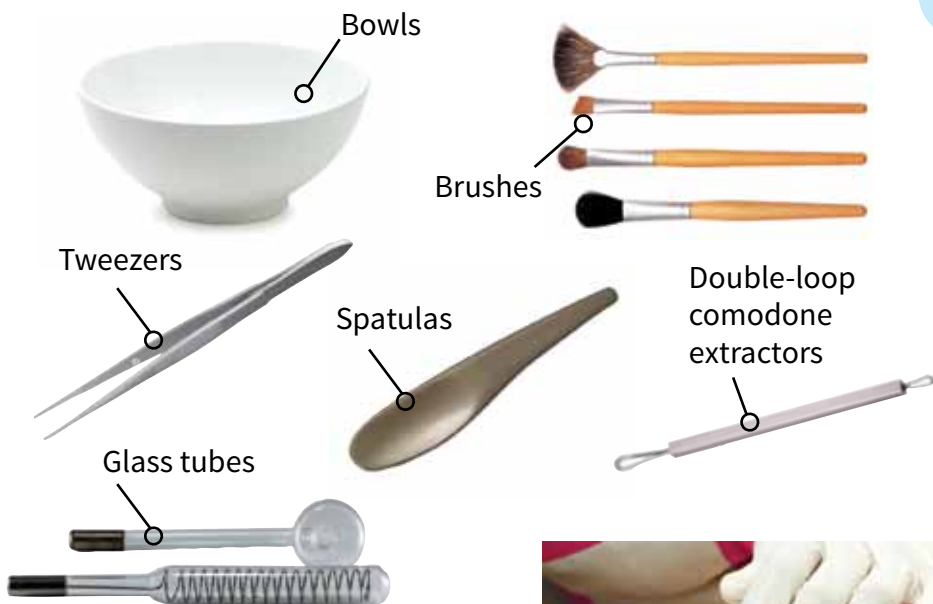
Don't be afraid to ask for **new ones** before your service

REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during



**These items are cleaned and disinfected or sterilized between each client:**



**Tip:** Contact with blood and body fluid is common during facial service. It is important that your spa worker wears gloves.

\***Needles and lancets** used for extractions must be in sterile packaging and be opened in front of the 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.

# Be Spa Safe 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 and blades are thrown away immediately after each use.

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

REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during



**These items are cleaned and disinfected between each client:**



Electric razors



Clippers

Combs and brushes

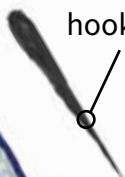
Straight blade razor handle



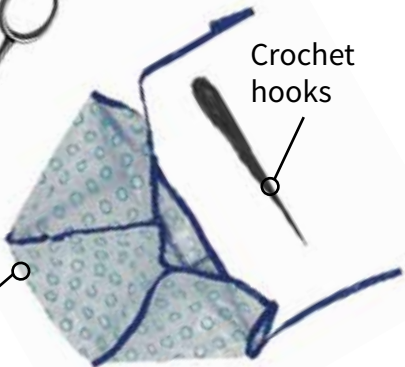
Scissors



Crochet hooks



Cap



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.

# Be Spa Safe Checklist

## for Ear Piercing Services

- ☒ The spa worker washes his/her hands before and after service
- ☒ The spa worker wears disposable gloves on both hands during service
- ☒ The client's ear lobes are cleaned with a skin antiseptic
- ☒ Jewelry is pre-packaged and sterile, and is opened in front of the client
- ☒ The client is given verbal and written aftercare instructions
- ☒ **These items are used on one client only, then thrown away:**



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

REMEMBER

Serious infections can be spread during





**These items are cleaned and disinfected or sterilized between clients:**



Ear piercing gun



Hand clasp device

## Ear piercing equipment

Ear piercing guns should only be used to pierce the ear lobe. **They should not be used to pierce other areas of the body** because this may cause tissue damage and increase your risk of infection.

## Tip:

Contact with blood and body fluid is common during ear piercing services. It is important that your spa worker wears gloves.



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.

## Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Be Spa Safe



Notes:

*Be Spa Safe*



*Be Spa Safe.*

**1-800-361-5653**

**TTY (for the hearing impaired)**

**1-866-252-9933**

**York Region Health Connection**

  
**York Region**

**www.york.ca**



facebook.com/YorkRegion



@YorkRegionGovt



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

[www.york.ca/bespasafe](http://www.york.ca/bespasafe)