

# ACUPUNCTURE

## Information for the general public

Porcupine Health Unit, Public Health Inspection Services, Control of Infectious Diseases

NOTE: This information is provided solely for your convenience and to increase awareness about the services you receive. This information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If you have medical questions arising from care you have received, speak with your doctor. If you have legal concerns about any acupuncture service, consult a lawyer.

Ontario consumers have the right to expect clean, safe services when having acupuncture.

Anytime the skin is pierced with a needle, bacteria and viruses can easily enter the body. You can get HIV, hepatitis B and C and other infections. You do not have to see blood or body fluids on needles, equipment or surfaces for an infection to occur. Make sure the provider you're dealing with has made both hygiene and appropriate sterilization or disinfection of equipment high priorities for their business.

### What to look for and ask:

- Make sure you go to a business that has been inspected by Public Health staff. Ask to see the most recent inspection report or call your local public health unit for more information.
- The business must be clean and well lit.
- The business must have a sink with liquid soap and paper towels to wash and dry hands.
- The worker must wash their hands before they touch you.
- Prior to being pierced with a needle, your skin first must be disinfected to kill any germs that may be on your skin.
- Needles must be pre-packaged and sterile and never re-used.
- Needles should not be pulled from your skin then used for another part of your body.
- After use, needles should be thrown out in a special container.
- Watch the worker remove the sterile needles from the package. The sterile needles should be used immediately after being removed from the package. They should not be placed on any surface before use.
- Only the upper part of the needle (called the "handle") can be touched when removed from the package.
- You have the right to ask the worker to explain how they clean and disinfect their equipment before the service begins.
- If you have any doubts, LEAVE.
- If you have any concerns, contact your local public health unit.

*Source: MOHLTC, Public Health Division, January 2010*

**For more information,  
contact your local  
health inspector  
or call 1-800-461-1818.  
[www.porcupinehu.on.ca](http://www.porcupinehu.on.ca)**

