

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

Attention: Family Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Walk-in Clinic Physician,

**Re: Infection Prevention and Control Lapse at Huai Kui Xu TCM Clinic located at  
150 Berwick Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4C 0B5**

York Region Public Health has become aware of potential health risks affecting individuals who received wet cupping and/or micro-needling/derma rolling services at the Huai Kui Xu TCM Clinic between October 1, 2015, and June 7, 2023.

On June 7, 2023, The Regional Municipality of York inspected the Huai Kui Xu TCM Clinic after being made aware of concerns with infection prevention and control practices.

Public Health concluded the clinic had inadequate infection prevention and control practices with respect to wet cupping and micro-needling/derma rolling services. Cupping is a form of alternative medicine where local suction is created on the skin using special cups. Wet cupping is when cupping is performed after the skin is punctured (for example, with acupuncture needles) and blood and/or body fluids are drawn out. Micro-needle rollers, or derma rollers, are devices with small, fine needles on a roller that are rolled over the face and/or body to create microtears in the skin. During wet cupping and micro-needling/derma rolling procedures, equipment may come into contact with blood and/or body fluids.

Devices used for wet cupping at the clinic were not properly cleaned and sterilized between clients and single use micro-needle/derma rollers were reused on multiple clients and there is a risk clients may have been exposed to a blood-borne infection such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Immediately upon identification of inadequate infection prevention and control practices, York Region Public Health issued a Section 13 order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to stop the clinic operator from performing services of concern. Currently, the operator is only permitted to provide assessments and provision of Chinese herbal medicine.

York Region completed a thorough investigation which included multiple site visits, a risk assessment, a literature review and consultations with Public Health Ontario and field experts. Public notifications were sent out as quickly as possible once York Region Public Health completed the investigation.

While the risk to clients who received wet cupping and/or micro-needling/derma rolling services at the clinic is considered low, as a precaution, York Region Public Health is advising Huai Kui Xu TCM Clinic clients who received one or more of these services between October 1, 2015, and June 7, 2023 (inclusive), to bring this letter and lab requisition to their family doctor, nurse practitioner or a walk-in clinic and request they be assessed and tested for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

We are asking that you please:

1. Fill out and sign parts one and two of the pre-filled lab requisition to test your patient for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. Please note, no additional lab requisitions are required if your patient is being tested for any or all of these blood-borne viruses.

2. Do not alter the remainder of the lab requisition in any way and avoid using your own or any alternative lab requisitions. The lab requisition has been assigned an investigation number (YRK-2023-00001) by Public Health Ontario and any alterations to the requisition could impede the investigation.
3. Discuss window periods with your patient and the need to retest for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in six months and HIV in six weeks from their last exposure date at the Huai Kui Xu TCM Clinic. A single negative test is sufficient to rule out infection if your patient's last exposure date was over six months ago. If repeat testing is warranted based on window periods, please use the same lab requisition template.
4. Counsel your patient about Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV prevention practices, including the benefits of being vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

A special arrangement has been made with the Public Health Ontario Laboratory so only one tube of blood is required for all the above tests and no additional lab requisitions are required. Dr. S. Erdman, Associate Medical Officer of Health at York Region Public Health, is copied on all test results for the purpose of tracking the results for our investigation.

York Region routinely inspects restaurants, pools, whirlpools, wading pools, splash pads, small drinking water systems, child care centres, before and after-school programs, recreational camps and personal service settings as per the *Ontario Public Health Standards*.

Regulated health professionals are regulated by their respective colleges and must follow infection prevention and control best practices as outlined by their regulatory colleges. York Region Public Health inspects regulated health professionals upon referral or complaints where there are concerns with infection prevention and control practices.

If you have any questions or concerns, including questions related to the window period for testing, please call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Erdman, MD, MSc, FRCPC  
Associate Medical Officer of Health