

Things you need to know

Are you at risk when having a personal care service? If you're not sure or don't have an answer to this question, read on.

Twenty five years ago, when I first came to Canada to work as an esthetician, most of the services available today were enjoyed only by affluent upper-middle class individuals.

Today the market has opened up in such a way that there are a variety of places ranging from Mini Spas to people's basements offering a wide range of services.

I am fully aware that standards and prices vary, which brings me to an important question: Are we putting ourselves at risk when having a service performed?

Three weeks ago I had a function to attend, having been extremely busy, my own personal care was falling behind, so off I went in search of a quick pedicure and leg wax.

Finding a location proved to be an easy task being that these services are readily available. The young lady was very polite and accommodating and upon learning that I was in the same field could not do enough to please.

The usual soaking bowl was promptly prepared and in plunged my feet. Anxious to get back in time for my client, I realized I didn't ask the most crucial question, **what are your hygienic standards?**

When seeking such services, here are a few points to consider. The following applies whenever having any esthetic or related services.

- Work area including floors

should be evidently clean and disinfected

- Towels should be fresh and washed after every client (even for your feet, dirty towels can transmit bacteria.)

- Tools should be disinfected with anti-fungal/anti-bacterial products (alcohol does not disinfect, it just cleans the surface)

- Creams should come from a pump bottle or a spatula should be used (hands never go into a product)

- Pedicure bowls should be washed and disinfected after each use

If ever in doubt that these procedures will be followed bring your own stuff whenever possible (i.e. nail files, creams etc.)

When having waxing done keep in mind that wax should never be reused because bacteria can stay trapped in wax even when it's reheated. The table should be fully and freshly covered by a disposable sheet of medical examination paper to avoid contact with hair or blood from previous clients.

It's also-very important to insist

when having your face treated that no sponges are used, all instruments are sterilized and disinfected (preferably with a professional sterilizer) and hands should be washed and dried with a paper towel every time your service provider leaves and enters the room.

This information is not to create panic, but rather to promote awareness for clients and service providers.

The issue of hygienic standards and the danger it poses has been brought up in the media regarding hospitals, but that only covers a fraction of areas at risk. I think it's crucial it becomes an issue in all areas where personal care is provided including hair and nail salons, as well as in the esthetic industry.

It's your duty to protect your health, so don't be afraid to ask questions!

Lisa Anella is a certified esthetician trained in Milan with over 25 years of experience. Lisa Anella owned and operated her own Mini Spa for over 20 years and now offers her service in advanced Esthetics to a multicultural clientele at the Snowdon Wellness Center at 4950 Queen Mary, Suite 225.

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