

AIDS : guidelines for hairdressers and barbers : don't die of ignorance / prepared by the Department of Health and Social Security and the Central Office of Information.

Contributors

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GOVERNMENT INFORMATION 1987

AIDS



GUIDELINES FOR
HAIRDRESSERS
AND BARBERS

DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE

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HAIRDRESSERS
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DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE

WHAT IS THE RISK?

No one has ever been known to catch the AIDS virus from hairdressing. And no one should in future either, if the procedures given here are always followed.

The risk involved with any one client is remote. But in the interests both of your clients and of yourself, safe procedures are essential because of the number of clients you work with every day and because it is not possible to tell whether a person is infected or not.

Because the AIDS virus is carried in blood, it is important that any equipment which has been contaminated with blood is sterilized or disinfected before it is used again on another client.

Although this leaflet has been published as part of the Government publicity about AIDS, the procedures followed will also protect your clients and yourself against hepatitis B, a more familiar but also serious risk.

AIDS AND HEPATITIS B

AIDS is caused by a virus which damages the body's defences against infection. AIDS virus is spread almost entirely by sexual intercourse or the transfer of blood from an infected person to another.

Hepatitis B is also caused by a virus and is transmitted in much the same way as the AIDS virus. It can produce severe illness with jaundice.

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RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

Make a practice of washing scissors, clippers, brushes etc at least once a day with soap and water and a brush.

If you pierce your own or your client's skin with scissors, clippers or any other equipment, do not use the equipment again until it has been sterilized or disinfected.

Do not use styptic pencils directly on to skin. Apply the styptic with a clean swab for each application.

Use single-use disposable razors or, if necessary, cut throat razors – but only those into which a fresh disposable blade can be inserted for each customer.

SKIN PREPARATION

Do not use sharp or pointed instruments on or near areas of skin that are obviously diseased or inflamed.

IMPORTANT

Remember, it is as essential to follow these procedures if you work in clients' homes as it is if you are salon based.

STERILIZATION

The best way to sterilize instruments is in an autoclave. If one is available it should be fully automatic, so that all you need to do is top it up with water, close it, and press a button. Plastic objects generally cannot be autoclaved. At the time of going to print (November 1987), a low cost pressure sterilizer is under development which may be a suitable alternative to an autoclave. Your Environmental Health Department will be able to advise on its availability.

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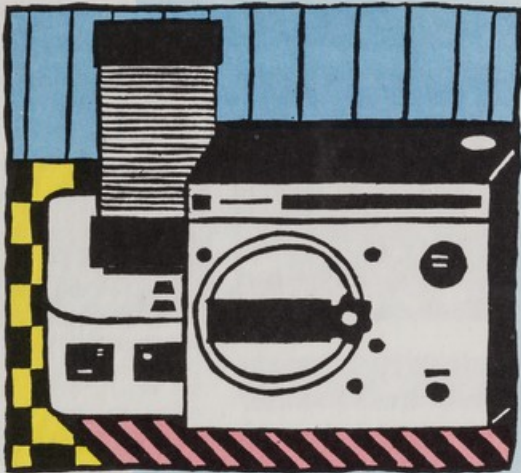
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A recommended glass bead sterilizer is a possible alternative for very light objects which can withstand heating at high temperatures.

Ultraviolet (UV) cabinets are not capable of sterilizing instruments properly.



DISINFECTION

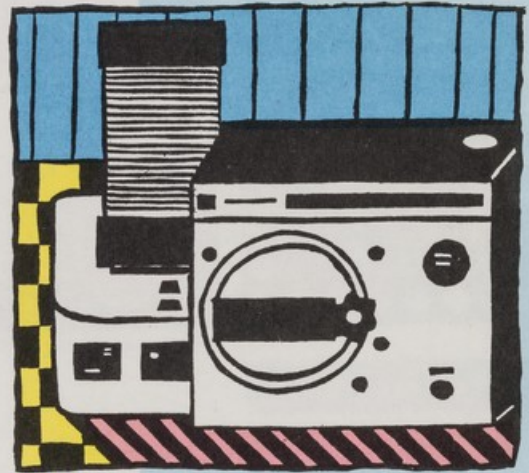
If you do not have access to the equipment recommended then one of the following disinfection processes must be used.

- Boil or steam items such as scissors, clipper blades or metal combs for a minimum of 5 minutes before cleaning them ready for use again.
- OR totally immerse the instrument in an alcohol solution made by mixing 7 parts of methylated or surgical spirit with 3 parts of water and clean it gently with a soft brush. Allow the instrument and the brush to soak in the alcohol for not less than 15 minutes before removing them for washing and drying ready for use again.

After using the alcohol pour it away down the sink with plenty of running water so as to avoid the risk of fire.

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GENERAL HYGIENE

- Keep everything clean. Floors should be regularly cleaned, carpets vacuumed and surfaces washed or disinfected if contaminated with blood.
- Wash your hands regularly and certainly between clients.

CUTS ON YOUR HANDS

- Cover existing wounds with a waterproof dressing. Wash fresh cuts, encourage bleeding under running water and then cover with a waterproof dressing.

DISPOSAL OF 'SHARPS'

Be careful when throwing away sharp or pointed instruments ('sharps'). Put disposable razor blades in a secure container such as a wide mouthed screw-topped plastic bottle or commercial 'sharps' container so that they cannot accidentally injure anyone. Advice on the collection or disposal of the 'sharps' container can be obtained from the local Environmental Health Department.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

This leaflet gives general guidance only. More information and advice is available from your local Environmental Health Department.

Other leaflets in this series include:

- Guidelines for acupuncturists*
- Guidelines for unregistered chiropodists*
- Guidelines for ear piercers*
- Guidelines for electrolysisists*
- Guidelines for tattooists*

There is a free, attractive poster available as a constant reminder of the general hygiene points made in this leaflet.

To order more leaflets or the poster, phone 0800 555 777 (24 hours). You won't be charged for your call.

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