

ELECTROLYSIS

Electrolysis is a form of hair removal that involves inserting a sterile needle into a hair follicle. An electric current is sent through the needle to damage or destroy the root of the hair.

INFECTION RISKS

Treatment by electrolysis typically results in red, swollen and tender skin. There is a risk of skin scarring, including enlarged keloid scars. Proper insertion of an electrolysis needle typically does not puncture the skin. However, electrolysis equipment can become contaminated with bacteria, fungi and viral blood borne pathogens such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Infections can spread from:

- Contaminated and/or improperly reprocessed equipment
- Contaminated environment
- Client's own bacteria on the skin
- Unclean hands touching the treated area

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Equipment:

All electrolysis needles are to be maintained as sterile until point of use. They are single use only, and are to be discarded in an approved sharps container after use.

- Electrolysis needles are to be used before the date of expiry indicated by the manufacturer.
 - **Do not use needles:**
 - if they are expired
 - if there isn't an expiry date
 - If there isn't a lot number
- Record and keep the manufacturer's lot number and expiry dates of the pre-packaged sterile equipment (including needles) used on clients. Keep records for at least three years, with a minimum of the most current past year being on site at the premises. one year on site
- All cords, control panels, or switches that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected between uses, that may come into contact with a client's skin or be handled by an operator during a service, must be covered with a single-use disposable cover. This cover is to be discarded immediately after each use.

Operational Requirements:

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- The service provider checks the client's skin for open cuts, wounds, and signs of infection. If found, service is refused
- Skin that is visibly soiled must be cleaned with soap and water before starting the procedure
- Operators are to apply skin antiseptic to the client's skin in the area that is being treated
- Only topical local anesthetic, approved for use by Health Canada, is permitted. The site is to be cleaned with a suitable skin antiseptic before applying the anesthetic.
- Skin antiseptics are to be stored and dispensed in a way that prevents contamination of the antiseptic. These products are to be dispensed from a single-use swab packet or onto a single-use clean cotton swab or cotton ball, and applied onto the skin according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Any ointment or astringent that is applied to soothe the skin, once the procedure is complete, must be dispensed in a manner that prevents the introduction and/or spread of disease-causing microorganisms
- Clients are to be provided with verbal and written aftercare information following the procedure, including a recommendation to see a doctor within 24 hours if any signs of infection develop

Reprocessing Classification

High-Level Disinfection	Intermediate-Level Disinfection	Low-Level Disinfection	Single-Use, Disposable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any equipment, instrument or item used to hold, manipulate or contact a sterile needle • Needle/probe holder or permanent attached pin device • Removable tip/cap (if reusable) • Tweezers used to expose ingrown hairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweezers used to remove hair from the hair follicle • Laser heads, tips and wands • Scissors used to cut hair • UV eye goggles for multiple-client use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment covered by single-use covers • Electrolysis electrodes and sponge covers (if applicable) • Foot-operating switches and cords • Cord and control panel that comes in contact with the client's skin or is handled by the worker † • Magnifying glass and arm/reusable magnifying goggles handles by worker • Service trays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrolysis needles* • Single-use PPE (gloves, masks, gowns, eye protection) • Roll-on wax cartridges • Single-use removable tip/cap • Swab/applicators used to apply skin antiseptic and ointments • Paper (used to cover the client table) • Plastic sheaths (used to cover cords, control panels, etc.) • Electrolysis electrodes and sponge covers (if used) • Disposable razors • Waxing strips and applicator sticks

*These items are to be sterile before use (packaged sterile or sterilized on-site)

† If covered with a sheath/cover during use; if not, reprocess as a non-critical, intermediate-level disinfection item as long as it can be easily or adequately cleaned and disinfected between each use

SOURCES

1. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Guide to infection prevention and control in personal service settings. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2019

This fact sheet was adapted with permission from CIPHI Ontario and is based on PSS best practice recommendations, current reprocessing standards and legislation. It is not an inclusive list of all requirements. Operators are responsible to ensure that all services are offered according to local requirements, best practices and legislation.