

Oregon Board of Massage Therapists

728 Hawthorne Ave NE

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Communicable Disease Guidelines

Adopted June 12, 1998

There are a number of infectious agents causing disease, which can be transmitted in person-to-person contact. Massage therapists work in close physical contact with their clients and thus are potentially at risk for both contacting and transmitting disease-causing organisms. Transmission routes are numerous and an organism can be conveyed from one person to another by more than one route. The examples listed below describe common disease entities and modes of transmission. The examples do not represent an all-inclusive list.

ROUTE OF TRANSMISSION	DISEASE
Skin to skin contact	Staphylococcal infection; Streptococcal infection; Lice; Scabies; Herpes
Skin contact with object contaminated with infectious agents (i.e. clothing, handles on faucets, doorknobs, etc.)	Lice (clothing); Measles; Upper respiratory; Viruses (i.e. cold); Conjunctivitis
Skin contact with infected secretions (i.e. runny noses, rubbing eyes or skin when an infectious agent is present)	Upper respiratory; Viruses (i.e. cold); Conjunctivitis; Streptococcal infection
Fecal contamination of food/fluids followed by oral ingestion (i.e. failure to wash hands after using the toilet followed by food handling)	Hepatitis A; Candida (yeast)
Inhalation of airborne organisms	Many bacteria and viruses (i.e. cold, whooping cough)
Impaired skin integrity or mucosal skin exposure to infected body fluids (i.e. contact with infected body fluids allow organisms to enter the body through a break in the skin such as a cut or through mucous membranes such as found in the mouth and genitalia)	Hepatitis B (saliva, semen, blood, vaginal fluids); Human immunodeficiency virus (H.I.V.) (blood, semen, vaginal fluids); Herpes

In the vast majority of instances transmission is preventable with the use of basic hygienic practices available to anyone. The following guidelines were developed to address such concerns:

General Recommendations

- A. Give rigorous attention to hand-washing practices. Washing is the primary protection against acquiring and transmitting infectious organisms. Wash fingertips to elbows prior to and after every massage activity. Use warm water with single use soap and paper towels or a personal cloth towel that no one else uses.

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- B. Provide single use soap and paper towels for client use in the restrooms.
- C. Encourage client hand-washing after use of the toilet via signs in the restrooms.
- D. Practice hand-washing after personal use of the toilet
- E. Practice, and encourage client practice, of turning off water taps with a paper towel after washing and drying hands.
- F. Follow guidelines detailed in administrative rules regarding proper care and cleaning of equipment and linen.
- G. Seek health care attention for diagnosis and treatment of symptoms that indicate an infectious process in the LMT.
- H. Encourage client to seek health care attention for diagnosis treatment of symptoms that indicate an infectious process.
- I. Conduct verbal and/or written assessments of client's health and presence of symptoms of possible infectious conditions that are transmissible through ordinary massage activities, especially respiratory or skin conditions (i.e. coughing, sneezing, severe itching of scalp or other area, rashes, wounds, skin lesions). Ask the client if he/she has a known communicable disease.
- J. If in doubt about potential for transmission, refrain from massage and request client to obtain evaluation of health from a licensed health-care provider. Do not risk infecting yourself or transmitting infection to another client. Use good judgment based on principles of healthful living, sanitation, and disease control.

**Specific
Recommen-
dations**

- A. If an LMT is displaying symptoms of an upper respiratory infection (fever, coughing, sneezing, green or yellow nasal discharge), refrain from massage until the symptoms are controlled. Wash your hands frequently, especially after blowing your nose or covering your mouth with your hand.
- B. If an LMT has an infectious skin rash, lesions, or an open wound of any kind on the hands or arms, do not massage until skin integrity is restored.
- C. If an LMT has an infectious body rash, do not massage until the infection is absent.

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- D. If an LMT has an infectious lesion or wound present on body areas other than hands and forearms, adequately bandage the area so no infective secretions come into contact with clothes or hands. Be thorough about hand washing after bandaging and before massaging.
- E. Individual LMTs who are carriers of Hepatitis B, H.I.V., or any other infectious organisms transmitted by body fluids must refrain from giving massages if there are any areas of the hands or forearms which, for any reason, are subject to bleeding or have open and/or draining areas in the skin. The practice of massage may be resumed once skin integrity is restored to the hands and arms.

* The OBMT has adopted various policies/guidelines to provide additional clarification and information for both licensees and the general public. This policy is supplemental to the Oregon Revised Statutes and Oregon Administrative Rules and as such does not supersede or replace information contained in the Statutes or Rules that govern massage. Should you have any questions regarding this policy please contact the Board office.