

# Bloodborne virus testing recommended for patients of the former dentist Dr William Tam

Information for GPs and clinicians in NSW - please distribute to all staff in your facility



## Key messages

1. Infection control concerns have been identified at former dentist Dr William Kwok Hung Tam's dental practice at Suite B, 2 Albert Road, Strathfield NSW.
2. There is a low risk of bloodborne virus transmission to patients.
3. Patients of Dr Tam are recommended to visit their GP for testing for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

## Infection control concerns

- Infection control concerns have been identified at former dentist Dr William Kwok Hung Tam's practice at Suite B, 2 Albert Road, Strathfield. Dr Tam was the sole dentist operating at the practice.
- Dr Tam is no longer registered.
- The Chief Health Officer has issued a public health alert for previous patients of Dr Tam, recommending testing for hepatitis B (HBsAg, HBsAb, HBcAb), hepatitis C (HCV Ab), and HIV (HIV Ab/Ag).
- NSW Health advises that there is a risk of bloodborne virus transmission for individual patients who have been treated at Dr Tam's practice due to infection control concerns.
- Dr Tam has been in practice at the Suite B, 2 Albert Road Strathfield since 2005. The timeframe of past infection control concerns is unclear. All previous patients are recommended to be tested if they meet the criteria outlined below.

## Testing for bloodborne viruses

- All patients who have seen the former dentist Dr Tam at the Strathfield dental practice should have, as a precaution, bloodborne virus testing for hepatitis B (HBsAg, HBsAb, HBcAb), hepatitis C (HCV Ab), and HIV (HIV Ab/Ag). If testing is performed less than six months since the last possible exposure to bloodborne viruses at the practice, it should be repeated at six months.
- Patients who are at particular risk are those who underwent invasive dental procedures at Dr Tam's Strathfield dental practice. Invasive procedures are where a needle or other instrument pierces the skin, gums or tooth pulp/root, or where bleeding occurs.
- Some patients requesting testing may already have a bloodborne virus infection from exposures unrelated to their dental treatment.
- Patients who have been tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV more than six months after their last treatment from Dr Tam do not require repeat testing.

## The risk of bloodborne virus acquisition from attending the practice is low

- Please reassure patients that their risk of bloodborne virus acquisition through the dental practice is low.
- If any of the dental patients test positive for one of these infections, please contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055.
- For anyone distressed by this news and needing mental health support, please advise them to call the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511. Support for people who live in NSW and who are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities is also available via the Transcultural Mental Health Line on 1800 648 911.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. E. Selvey'.

Dr Christine Selvey  
Director, Communicable Diseases Branch, Health Protection NSW

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