

Frequently Asked Questions – Medsound Diagnostic Imaging, Hornsby

What is the issue? How was it identified?

Following a complaint by a patient, the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) investigated Medsound and found that the owner was performing tests and writing reports when not qualified to do so. On 24 November, the HCCC issued a [public warning](#) and an [Interim Prohibition Order](#) which stops the owner providing health care services.

The HCCC also informed NSW Health, who looked at infection control practices and referred their findings to an expert panel. On 26 November, the expert panel recommended that patients who had certain procedures at Medsound should see their doctor and, as a precaution, have screening for blood borne virus infections (hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV). This was because the equipment may not have been cleaned properly between patients, and the owner was not qualified or registered.

Who is at risk?

The risk is considered to be low and only applies to people who had certain procedures at the clinic. These procedures are those in which the ultrasound probe was in contact with mucous membranes or non-intact skin. This includes scans in which the probe is put into the vagina or rectum (transvaginal/transrectal), scans of the eye and any scan on broken skin, such as a wound. Available information suggests that musculoskeletal injections were performed by a qualified medical practitioner, but due to unsatisfactory record keeping, this cannot be reliably confirmed. We therefore recommend that anybody who underwent a surgical procedure or injection also see their GP. Tests performed on intact skin are not a risk. If you are not sure which procedure you had, check with your doctor.

What are the diseases I may have been exposed to?

There is also a small risk that a patient who had one of the procedures listed above may have been exposed to a blood borne virus (hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV) potentially passed on from another patient who was already infected. Effective treatments exist for all three infections.

Poor infection control practices may also have resulted in other types of infections. You can discuss the risk of these with your GP.

How will I know if I have these diseases?

Only those who have had procedures listed in the “Who is at risk” section need to be concerned about infections as a result of their ultrasound test. Bacterial infections usually result in symptoms within a few days to a week after the procedure was performed, although some infections will not cause symptoms. Your doctor can advise about certain situations, such as the potential for infections in the genitourinary tract.

Blood borne viruses may cause no symptoms at the time of infection, or for years afterwards. Infections caused by these viruses are easily detected by a blood test. It is beneficial for everyone to know whether they are infected with these viruses, as there is effective treatment available.

What should I do if I think I have had a risk procedure?

NSW Health is writing to all patients of Medsound. NSW Health recommends that people who have had a risk procedure at Medsound be tested for blood borne virus infections and talk to their GP about the potential risk of other infections. If you are not sure if you had a risk procedure, speak with your regular doctor or the doctor who referred you to Medsound and take the letter with you. A copy of the letter is on the website: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/diagnostic-imaging-medsound.aspx>

I already have one of these diseases – who can I talk to about this?

Talk to your doctor about monitoring and management.

What tests do I need to have?

If you have had a risk procedure, your doctor can organise blood tests for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection. Your doctor can also recommend any other tests depending on the type of procedure you had.

How soon will I know the results of the tests?

Your doctor will tell you when the results of the tests will be available. Usually results are available in less than 7-10 days.

Will I have to pay for seeing my doctor and having these blood tests?

You should use your usual arrangements to see your doctor and get the blood tests – usual Medicare or private health insurance rebates apply.

What does it mean if I have a positive test result? What should I do?

Talk to your doctor about your results. A positive result means that you have been infected with a blood borne virus at some time in the past. Your doctor will tell you whether your infection is active now (infectious) or if your body has already cleared the infection. For hepatitis B and hepatitis C, you may have cleared the virus, or you may have a long term (chronic) infection. HIV infection is always a lifelong infection.

A positive test for a blood borne virus or any other infection does not necessarily mean you were infected during the ultrasound procedure that you had at Medsound. More information on infection with blood borne viruses is available from:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/default.aspx>

I wish to make a complaint about Medsound– who can I talk to?

If you want to make a complaint or raise a concern about health care services in NSW, contact:

- the [NSW Health Care Complaints Commission](#) via its website or call 1800 043 159 or (02) 9219 7444

If the complaint is about a registered health care practitioner or student, contact:

- the [NSW Health Professional Councils Authority](#) via its website or call 1300 197 177

How do I know if other doctors are safe?

If you have concerns about a particular practitioner, you can check their registration status on the [national register](#).

Where can I find further information?

For disease specific information, please refer to:

- [Hepatitis B factsheet](#)
- [Hepatitis C factsheet](#)
- [HIV factsheet](#)

If you have further questions, please call your local public health unit on 1300 066 055.