



# Montano Deer Park Patient Notification

## Q&A

Sept. 18, 2024

The following are answers to questions regarding the Washington State Department of Health's and the Spokane Regional Health District's recommendation for patients who received care from Sandy Fletcher Montano, DDS, at the Deer Park Dental Clinic (118 E. Crawford, Deer Park, WA 99006) during the time period between Nov. 2021 and June 2022. The public notification can be found at [doh.wa.gov/newsroom](https://doh.wa.gov/newsroom).

## Recommendations and Testing

- **I was a patient; do I need to get tested?**
  - Washington State Department of Health and Spokane Regional Health District recommend that patients seen by Sandy Fletcher Montano, DDS at Deer Park Dental Clinic between November 2021 and June 2022 be tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.
  - Patients should contact their personal healthcare providers to review their medical history for previous infection and to arrange for testing.
  - A complaint regarding infection control practices was received in November 2021 by Washington State Department of Health. Patients treated by Dr. Montano at Deer Park Dental Clinic before November 2021 or at dental clinics where Dr. Montano previously practiced should speak to their healthcare provider about potential risks and decide whether to seek testing.
- **I was a patient; should I go to the emergency room?**
  - No. This potential exposure is not immediately life threatening and does not require a visit to an emergency room. Emergency rooms should be used for immediate health emergencies only.
  - Instead, please call your healthcare provider and make an appointment to get tested.
- **Where should I go to get tested?**
  - Testing can be conducted by a patient's own healthcare provider.
  - If a patient does not have a healthcare provider, most urgent care clinics also provide testing.



- **I am a doctor and have a patient in my office who received care at this dental clinic. Which tests should I order?**
  - For hepatitis C, CDC recommends HCV antibody testing with an immediate reflex to RNA for any positive antibody results, see [Recommended Testing Sequence for Identifying Current Hepatitis C Virus \(HCV\) Infection \[CDC\]](#)
  - For hepatitis B, CDC recommends Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg), hepatitis B total surface antibody (Anti-HBs), and total antibody to hepatitis B core antigen (total anti-HBc); see [Clinical Testing and Diagnosis for Hepatitis B \[CDC\]](#) and [Nonpregnant adults aged ≥ 18 without a known history of HBV infection \[CDC\]](#)
  - For HIV, CDC recommends HIV antibody testing, see [Clinical Testing Guidance for HIV \[CDC\]](#)
- **I was a patient of Dr. Montano's at another clinic besides Deer Park Dental Clinic. Do I need to get tested?**
  - The Washington State Department of Health has no record of other complaints related to infection control practices by Dr. Montano outside of Deer Park Dental Clinic. If patients are concerned, they should speak to their healthcare provider.
- **Is post-exposure prophylaxis available to exposed people?**
  - The window of time for post-exposure prophylaxis for hepatitis B (one week) and HIV (one month) is very short and has passed. There is no post-exposure prophylaxis for hepatitis C.
  - Some exposed persons may have previously received hepatitis B vaccination either in childhood or as an adult. We advise checking your vaccination history and speaking with your healthcare provider.

## Incident and Risk

- **What occurred at this dental clinic that put patients at risk for exposure?**
  - Potential infection control breaches were identified via a reported complaint and included improper cleaning and disinfection of reusable equipment and improper reuse of disposable equipment. These practices could expose patients to blood and other infectious materials.



- **How high is the risk that I've been infected with viral hepatitis or HIV from this office?**
  - The risk of contracting disease is believed to be low based on similar incidents in other states. However, out of abundance of caution, the Washington State Department of Health and Spokane Regional Health District are recommending testing for patients seen at Deer Park Dental Clinic from November 2021 to June 2022.
- **What is the status of the dental practice?**
  - The Washington State Department of Health suspended Dr. Montano's dental license in June 2022 and his practice closed. Dr. Montano's license was indefinitely suspended in April 2024 and he is no longer able to practice in Washington state.
- **Has anyone been infected with HIV or viral hepatitis from this clinic?**
  - As of this patient notification, no cases of hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV have been identified as connected with this clinic.
- **What is hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV?**
  - Hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV are 3 different viral infections that can be transmitted through body fluids.
  - Infected people can continue to spread the infection to others unless they take certain precautions.
  - Hepatitis B and C cause inflammation of the liver and may lead to liver scarring, liver failure, and liver cancer.
  - HIV damages the immune system putting people at risk for other infections.
  - Detailed information on each of these conditions can be found on the CDC website: hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. Patients can also seek additional information from their healthcare provider.
- **Are these viral infections treatable?**
  - Yes, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV can be treated.
  - Some people who become infected with hepatitis B and hepatitis C are sick for a short time and then clear (get over) the infection. Others may become chronically infected which can lead to liver disease.
  - HIV is treatable but there is no cure for infection.