

# Risk of infection low in tissue transplant scare, hospital says

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[CBC News](#)

Former patients of a hospital in Windsor, Ont., will be tested for HIV and other infectious diseases because tissues they received in surgeries weren't screened properly.

Dr. Art Kidd, chief of staff at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital, said he has called 21 people to tell them they need to be tested following orthopedic or neurological surgeries.

"I reassured them that the chances of any adverse outcome from this was almost negligible, but we couldn't say zero," said Kidd.

The surgeries were performed between January 2003 and October 2005.

In October 2005, Health Canada advised 125 people across Canada received human bone, skin and tendons that may not have been properly tested for these infections:

- HIV.
  - Hepatitis B and C.
  - Syphilis.
  - Human T-cell lymphotropic virus (HTLV 1 and II) – a rare blood virus believed to cause cancer.
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- FROM OCT. 27, 2005: [Canadians tested for infectious diseases in tissue transplant scare](#)



*Dr. Art Kidd*

Health Canada ordered hospital and dental offices to stop doing business with Biomedical Tissue Services of New Jersey, saying the company may have obtained its products from questionable sources.

Health Canada issued a recall of all unused tissue, and said past patients should be tested.

Hôtel-Dieu Grace then started sifting through its medical records, said Pat Somers, vice-president of patient services.

"That was quite an undertaking because we are talking about multiple charts, and in fact we've probably gone through in excess of 2,000 charts in total."

## **Lawsuits planned**

Windsor resident Maureen Arsenault said she was stunned when told she needs to be tested. "You start thinking about the scenarios and what could be, you know, it makes you fearful."

A spokesperson for Hôtel-Dieu Grace said the hospital recognizes the news is stressful, and hopes no patients will be physically harmed.

The U.S. company is currently under criminal investigation for allegedly selling body parts illegally harvested from New York-area funeral homes.

Arsenault's lawyer, Greg Monforton, said they'll decide who to sue and for how much once her tests come back. Monforton said his firm has heard from at least one other patient in the border city.

In the U.S., patients have launched their own lawsuits, including one woman who says she contracted syphilis. Families of some of the dead whose body parts may have been snatched at funeral homes are also suing.

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