



## **B.C. Ear Bank Homografts**

Calgary Health Region has been notified by the B.C. Ear Bank that bone and tissues (including ossicles, tympanic membranes, tympanic membranes with mallei attached, ear bone plugs, temporal bones, costal cartilage and dura mater) used for Inner Ear Reconstruction between 1986 and 1997 may pose a small risk of infection to patients.

### **Background**

A recent review of the B.C. Ear Bank's procedures related to the procurement, processing, sterilization, packaging and distribution of bone and tissues showed inadequate documentation. Accordingly, the B.C. Ear Bank is unable to verify with 100% certainty that the materials pose no risk of HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C transmission.

- ♦ Eighty-seven (87) hospitals or individual physicians across Canada received ear tissue from the B.C. Ear Bank and all have been notified of this risk.
- ♦ The risk of transmission to these transplant patients is low. Health Canada estimates that in the worst case scenario, risk of transmission is 1 in 10,000. It is more likely that the actual risk is about 1 in 100,000 for Hepatitis C or Hepatitis B and about 1 in 1 million for HIV.
- ♦ Between 1986 and 1987 the Colonel Belcher Hospital received three (3) harvested incus bones from the B.C. Ear Bank for use in Inner Ear Reconstruction surgery. Calgary Health Region has not been able to confirm the tissue material was actually transplanted and is currently checking its medical records to determine if the material was used.
- ♦ The material has not been used in the Calgary health region since 1987.
- ♦ Tissue harvesting centres in Alberta routinely screen and test tissue to minimize the risk of transmitting disease.

### **Action Taken by Calgary Health Region**

- ♦ Calgary Health Region is reviewing its records to identify the patients who may have received Inner Ear Reconstruction surgery in this time period with the incus bones from the B.C. Ear Bank.
- ♦ Where possible, Calgary Health Region will contact by phone and by letter all identified patients and their physicians.
- ♦ Patients will be encouraged to visit their family physicians for information and testing.
- ♦ Any person who may have had Inner Ear Reconstruction surgery between 1986 and 1987 at the Colonel Belcher Hospital can phone 944 – 1378 for information.

### **People living in the Calgary health region who had surgery elsewhere in Canada**

While the material from the B.C. Ear Bank was used only at the Colonel Belcher Hospital in Calgary, for up to three people who had Inner Ear Reconstruction surgery between 1986 and 1987, there is the possibility that the material was used by other hospitals. In Alberta the other hospitals using material from the B.C. Ear Bank were Lethbridge Regional Hospital and St. Michael's Health Centre. Both hospitals are located in the Chinook Health Region. For information regarding Inner Ear Reconstruction surgeries at those two hospitals please call 1-403-382 – 6006.

If your patient had Inner Ear Reconstruction surgery at a hospital in another province, then the B.C. Ear Bank has an information phone line for health professionals that you can call to check if that hospital also received material. Please call 1-877-806 – 9222.

### **What Testing Should be Done?**

- ♦ The appropriate tests would be for Hepatitis B (HBsAg and anti-HBs.) Hepatitis C antibody, and an HIV test.
- ♦ All tests should be sent to the Provincial Laboratory of Public Health, and should be accompanied by information that the person is being tested because of having received a transplant from tissues from the B.C. Ear Bank.

### **What Do I Tell my Patients?**

*The risk of transmission to these transplant patients is low.*

Health Canada estimates that in the worst case scenario, risk of transmission is 1 in 10,000. It is more likely that the actual risk is about 1 in 100,000 for Hepatitis C or Hepatitis B and about 1 in 1 million for HIV.

### **Questions?**

Questions or concerns regarding the risks of transmission: please contact Dr. Judy MacDonald, Deputy Medical Officer of Health at (403) 943 – 8032.

Questions or concerns regarding people who may have had surgery: please contact Ms. Muriel Shewchuk, Director Surgical Services at (403) 944 – 1378.

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Acknowledgement: Dr. Margaret Russell, MOH, Regional Health Authority 5