Patients of Gap Free Smile dental practice at 2/787 Old Cleveland Road, Carina are advised there is a low risk of transmission of the blood borne viruses Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

Queensland Health recommend all patients see their family doctor and be tested for these viruses.

Possible exposure
Poor infection prevention practices at dental practices may result in an infection from bacteria, viruses or other organisms in the mouth.

Probability of infection
Queensland Health is not currently aware of any person being infected with a blood borne virus after undergoing procedures at Gap Free Smile.

Invasive procedures
Patients who have undergone an invasive procedure at Gap Free Smile may have a very low (but not zero) risk of acquiring a blood borne virus from care received at this dental practice.

Invasive procedures are where a needle or other instrument pierces the skin, gums or tooth pulp/root, or where bleeding occurs. The risk of infection may be higher if a person had multiple invasive procedures.

Non-invasive procedures
Patients who have only had non-invasive procedures such as removal of plaque without bleeding, a routine examination, x-rays and/or placement of crowns are considered to be at a much lower or negligible risk of acquiring a blood borne virus.

Symptoms and detection
Blood borne viruses may not cause symptoms at the time of infection, or for years afterwards. Infections with all of these viruses can easily be detected by a blood test.

Test results and transmission sources
A positive result for one of these infections will not necessarily mean that the patient was infected at Gap Free Smiles, as there are other sources of these infections.

There are a number of different ways in which blood borne viruses can spread between people, including via sex, from mother to child at birth and from anything that has been contaminated that pierces the skin, such as medical instruments, tattooing or body piercing equipment, shared razors or injecting equipment.

Most people with chronic hepatitis B got their infection at birth or in early childhood from their mother or other family member.

Some countries have a higher rate of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and/or HIV—people from such countries may already have one of these infections without knowing that they are infected.
**Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B virus is a virus that can infect the liver. The virus can cause either acute (short-lived) or chronic (long-term) liver disease. Although many people with hepatitis B have no symptoms, the virus can live in the liver tissue and cause severe scarring and liver damage, which can have long-lasting effects on a person's health.

**Symptoms**

More than half of those infected with hepatitis B show few or no symptoms. This can be a risk as they may transmit the virus to others without knowing it.

If there are symptoms, they usually develop within one to three months of infection and can include: a yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea and/or vomiting, dark urine, weakness and tiredness, general aches and pains, and fever.

These symptoms last from days to a few weeks and may get better without treatment but this doesn’t mean that the virus has gone.

**Diagnosis**

Hepatitis B is detected by a blood test. This can show if a person has current infection or has had hepatitis B in the past but is no longer infectious. Tests can also show if there is any damage to the liver.

**Treatment**

There is no specific treatment for acute hepatitis B, but it usually resolves within a few months. People with acute hepatitis B are advised to rest, drink plenty of fluids, and to have regular check-up tests with their doctor to ensure the infection clears and the liver recovers.

If a person still has hepatitis B after six months, the infection is called chronic hepatitis B and treatment choices should be discussed with a specialist liver doctor. There are treatments available for chronic hepatitis B to minimise long-term damage to the liver.

**More information**


**Hepatitis C**

Hepatitis C is also a virus that can infect the liver. It is different to hepatitis B. When a person is first infected with hepatitis C they may have short-term symptoms known as an acute infection.

After the acute infection stage, most people do not get rid of the virus from their body and hepatitis C can become a long-term illness called a chronic hepatitis C infection. When this occurs, the virus stays in their body and may cause ongoing disease of the liver. People who have acute and chronic infection can pass the infection on to other people. Those who develop chronic infection and are infected with the virus for many years can go on to develop liver scarring (cirrhosis) and cancer of the liver.

**Symptoms**

Most people have no symptoms when they are first infected with hepatitis C. If there are symptoms, they usually develop within one to three months of infection and can include: loss of appetite; nausea and
sometimes vomiting; tiredness; abdominal pain; yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice); dark urine and pale stools; and swollen and painful liver.

**Diagnosis**

Hepatitis C is diagnosed by a blood test.

**Treatment**

There are now very effective medical treatments available for chronic hepatitis C which involve taking medication for two to three months. These have few side effects and have a cure rate of over 90%.

**More information**

More information on hepatitis C is available on the Queensland Government website:  

**HIV**

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. Untreated HIV can affect a person's immune system—the body's defence against disease. When HIV attacks the immune system, it can cause many different infections and illnesses.

When the immune system has been badly damaged by untreated HIV infection, usually over many years, people can get sick from related infections or cancers. At this stage of HIV infection, a person is said to have AIDS.

HIV is not the same as AIDS. AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome. It's a term which only applies to the most advanced stages of HIV infection. AIDS cannot be transmitted between people.

**Symptoms**

Most people with HIV look and feel well for many years—many people may not even know they are infected.

**Diagnosis**

HIV is detected by a blood test.

Screening tests like the HIV point of care tests (also known as ‘rapid tests’) can be used outside the laboratory by trained health professionals with results available in 20 to 30 minutes. A ‘reactive’ result on this test is not a diagnosis of HIV and the test result needs to be confirmed by a laboratory blood test.

**Treatment**

Over the last few years, HIV treatment has vastly improved and taking HIV treatment on an ongoing basis usually allows HIV positive people to lead long and healthy lives.

While there remains no cure for HIV, commencing treatment at an early stage and continuing this treatment is important to stay healthy.

**More information**

More information on HIV is available on the Queensland Government website:  