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## It's safe to visit your dentist

**I REFER** to "Woman believed to have contracted HIV from dentist visit" (Press Digest, Nov 10) based on a report in *Sin Chew Daily*, and the resulting fall in attendances at dental clinics. I appeal to the public not to be intimidated by this scare.

The Health Minister has assured that the ministry will take appropriate measures to handle the two cases referred to in the articles.

We will only be 100% sure as to where the cause of infection came after complete investigations by the ministry's Oral Health Division.

At the moment it is not definite that

these two HIV cases resulted from tooth extractions. I would like to reassure the public that all dental clinics registered with the ministry follow its rules on infection control. All clinics have autoclaves for sterilisation of dental instruments and dentists use disposable needles, cups, bips, gloves, masks, etc.

In fact, dentists are more at risk than the patients, and we take maximum care to protect both ourselves and the patients. The chances of a patient getting infected with the AIDS virus in a dental clinic are thus very slim.

As stated by the Malaysian AIDS Council, although the AIDS virus can be

spread during dental treatment if strict standards of infection control are not followed by a dentist, the chances are very small, and the public should have no fear of going to the dentist. So please do not get unduly worried and continue your dental treatment without fear.

Dental charges have gone up due to the precautionary measures taken by the dentists, and the increase in the cost of instruments and materials.

**Dr Jaspall Singh**  
**President**  
**Malaysian Private Dental**  
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