

Nail salons



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Health hazards lurk in salons, however understanding what hazards you face when you walk through the salon doors may help you avoid infections and other problems with your nails after you leave. Each salon visit poses a health hazard to both the customer and nail technician. The most common hazards in nail salons are fungal infections caused by bacteria, fungi or yeasts. The infection easily spreads through contaminated or improperly cleaned instruments or foot baths. The manicurist may spread infection if she fails to sanitize her hands and station between clients, or if products become contaminated. Infected nails appear yellowed or discolored with a thick nail. Nail infections are unsightly, but rarely cause other health problems. Fungal infections will linger if left untreated. The treatment for fungal infections consists of oral medication; while nothing can be done for the appearance of the nail until the nail grows out. Look for a UV Tool Sterilizer or bring your own tools as small, bleeding cuts acquired by unsanitary tools and conditions during the manicure or pedicure can expose customers to hepatitis B " the silent killer" and HIV infection, which are cited to be rare. Cleanliness keeps away most salon health hazards. As a customer, you should ensure a salon follows proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures before your appointment. E-coli has been found on tools in a nail salon because a client went to the bathroom and did not wash their hands. Check that the salon and your manicurist are both licensed and that the salon has been inspected. Notice the condition of your manicurist's hands - if her hands have cuts, scrapes or are otherwise dirty leave the salon. Take notice how the instruments, appliances, and foot baths are cleaned and disinfected also be sure the solution is fresh. The pedicure chair and tub should be scrubbed with an antibacterial solution between clients and

instruments sterilized with ultraviolet light or a cold sterilization process. Wiping instruments with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide is ineffective. In addition to thoroughly cleaning their tools, manicurists should also ensure their workstation is properly cleaned between clients. This means that clean paper towels and a cleaning solution such as Lysol or Clorox should be used to wipe down the work area to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria. To ensure your personal health during a salon visit consider purchasing your own set of manicure instruments if you visit salons frequently. A customer should also ask the manicurist to push back their cuticles rather than clipping them. At all cost cuts should be avoided as customers are then more susceptible to infection. Each salon service poses the risk of infection such as the wearing acrylic nails; long-term wear cause nail thinning and higher chance of infection. Similarly, do not allow the manicurist to file and thin the surfaces of your nails to apply acrylic nails. Ask your manicurist to apply creams, lotions and other products with disposable applicators. In the event you contract an infection it needs to be reported to the salon and the State Board of Cosmetology. Many studies and surveys have uncovered how dangerous it is to have manicures and pedicures - it shows that toxic ingredients used in manicures and pedicures not only affect the customers, but more importantly, the people working in these salons who are exposed to these toxic chemicals day after day. Approximately 350, 000 people are employed in nail salons and other personal care services in the United States. These estimates include a workforce that is largely female - employing a large number of minority workers (80% are overworked, under paid and Vietnamese). Nail salon employees are potentially exposed to dozens of chemicals including acrylates, solvents, and biocides as dusts or

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vapors. A small but growing number of studies have examined the links between nail technicians' work and health outcomes which include respiratory, neurological, and musculoskeletal effects and other health conditions. The contaminants can be less damaging and prevented from entering the breathing zone when handled properly. These chemicals should be stored in sealed containers and disposed of in metal trash cans with lids to contain fumes and odors from used applicators. In order to eliminate or reduce vapor filled air the ventilation system of the salon needs an exhaust recirculation — drawing contaminated air through a filter and then venting it back into the salon. During the application of artificial fingernails additional simple measures can be taken to reduce exposure such as keeping dispensers closed and wearing face masks, long sleeves and gloves to protect the technician's skin from potential irritants and sensitizers.

Chemicals like DBP was banned in nail products in the European Union where there are strict limits on the amount of formaldehyde and toluene that can be used; yet in the U. S. exposure to Di-n-butyl phthalate (DBP) was detected in the urine sample of nail technicians due to its presence in polishes, topcoats and basecoats. Phthalates are cited to have caused reproductive dangers, birth defects along with damage to the testes, prostate gland, epididymis, penis and seminal vesicles in animals. In addition over the last several years scientific studies have shown a correlation between a nail technician's health and the 2 other "toxic trio" of carcinogenic ingredients: formaldehyde used in disinfectants that cause cancer and asthma; and toluene in nail polish linked to anemia, lowered blood cell count, liver/kidney damage, affects short term memory and developing fetus. These are just a few of the many other very toxic chemicals used in manicures and pedicures

including ethyl methacrylate and oxybenzone. Every time you have a manicure, your nails and skin or your hands and arms taking on and absorbing these toxic chemicals to be stored in your body's fatty tissues. Nail polish chips as it becomes brittle -DBP is leached out of the film which means that every time a woman washes her hands, DBP is washed out of her nail polish and contacts her skin therefore not only can absorb DBP through her nail, but also has multiple opportunities to absorb DBP directly through her skin. Scientists conclude that water-soluble components attain the skin during extensive but transient contact. A safer, healthier alternative is the use of nail polishes, treatments and removers without harmful chemicals - ideally to bring your own, a non-toxic version. Though the majority of companies are no longer using toxic ingredients, a few holdouts still are — and while the chemicals in the polish are not illegal mislabeling the polish as toxin free is. In the end a healthier alternative when it comes to beautifying your nails is: buffing to create a nice, smooth sheen to your nails. An added boon is that it may actually help your nails grow stronger and longer due to increased circulation and you won't have to worry about chipped nail polish either. Lastly we must understand that not all nail salons and spas are created equal. They may look the same on the inside or outside, have employees with the same salary, and charge the same prices but there are major differences. In the end not only our health but our lives can depend on toxic exposures, unsafe practices and unsanitary conditions we subject ourselves to — “ to pamper or not to pamper”.