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Nail Salons & Hygiene – What You Should Know Before Getting Your Nails Done

By Lisa Curiel

I recently came across an interesting article on nail salon hygiene while thumbing through a magazine at my local beauty salon.

In this study, a group of 15 nail salon shadow shoppers was asked to visit professional nail salons and report on their hygiene levels. (Naturally, I imagined myself being one of these lucky shadow shoppers and told to "go for it" at the nail parlor and to spare no expense – can you imagine? I'll take a french manicure, no ... wait! Make that a natural nail manicure, definitely a pedicure, gimme the latest nail fashion and make sure you use the best fingernail polish money can buy. Or maybe I'll just go crazy and add Hollywood nails, no ... acrylic nails, no, wait ... how about some nail tattoos, or some airbrushed nail art ... oh I know! give me some of those fabulous Tammy Taylor nails ... my, how lovely it is to daydream!)

Anyway, over 50 nail salons were visited and, according to the study, more than a third of the salons visited were found to be unsatisfactory, with their main complaints being bad hygiene standards, poor customer service and shoddily done manicures.

Upon entering the salon, the participants were instructed to ask for a complete manicure, tell the nail technician that they had never had a professional manicure done before, then ask the salon professional to describe what the process entailed. After the session was over, each of the participants were asked to fill a questionnaire, reporting on various aspects of their experience – levels of hygiene observed, how long the manicure took and how much it cost and whether the experience was satisfactory or not.

According to the report, 92% of the technicians who attempted to use metal cuticle clippers on the shadow shoppers didn't put on gloves. Even worse, they did not use an implement that was package-sealed, even though half of the nail technicians claimed the instrument had been autoclaved (an autoclave is a pressurized device that uses steam and high water pressure to sterilize equipment). The shoppers also reported several hygiene breaches on equipment such as nail files and buffers, which should either be disposable or cleaned between clients. A few salons had surfaces that weren't cleaned between clients and were covered in dust, or even pieces of skin. In one salon, a technician

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kept her dirty implements in the cash drawer.

Some of the actual comments from the survey participants regarding the low hygiene levels they experienced were as follows:

"The technician picked up the metal scissors ... used on someone else's feet ... she used them to cut some skin from around her own nail. She then went to use them on me." "This salon had an overpowering smell that burnt my throat and made me feel ill." "The technicians washed the handtowels in the foot spas." "Counters and floors were dirty, instruments reused and technicians did not wash their hands at all." "The technician had open wounds on her hands. I asked her to put gloves on."

If a salon has overpowering fumes, it may be a sign of poor ventilation, especially where a salon engages in a lot of acrylic nail work. The preferred substance for making acrylic nails, ethyl

methacrylate, can be hazardous if used in a salon without proper ventilation. A strong, unpleasant odour could also mean they're using dangerous substances, such as Methyl Methacrylate (MMA).

What To Look For In A Nail Salon

Here are some of the things you look for when visiting a nail salon:

- Use only accredited salons and technicians and look for certifications of competency, which should be displayed prominently in the salon.
- The salon should be clean and tidy, with linen and towels changed between clients.
- All chemicals should be in clearly marked containers.
- Metal tools that could penetrate the skin should be sterilized in an autoclave.
- Non-disposable nail implements should be rinsed, scrubbed in tepid water and detergent and dried, or wiped with 70% alcohol between clients.
- Some nail salons keep implements especially set aside for each regular client. You should ask your nail technician to do this for you, if you are a regular client of a nail salon.
- Nail implements need to be clean and dry. Don't let anyone use an implement on you that's been left sitting in water, even if the water contains disinfectant.
- Don't use a foot spa if you've shaved your legs the night before or on the day of the pedicure, or if you have any cuts on your legs, as this makes you more vulnerable to infection.
- If you are having acrylic nails put on, ask your nail artist to explain the procedure, what products they're going to use and how to care for the nails at home.
- Don't be shy to ask questions about the manicure, the chemicals being used and how the implements have been cleaned.

The salon I normally go to is very professional and clean, the technicians are highly competent and certified and all procedures are explained in great detail when asked. So, I went ahead and pampered myself for almost an hour and got myself some beautiful nails (included in the manicure was a nail bath, filing and buffing and cuticle work) and a massage. Maybe next time I'll go for nail tattoos or those Tammy Taylor nails!

Read the full article at:

<http://www.beauty-info-resources.com/nail-salon-hygiene.html>

Lisa Curiel is the editor of

<http://Beauty-Info-Resources.com>

, a site that provides articles, resources,

news and information about beauty, skin care, hair care, nail care, weight loss and more. Visit her website at:

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for more information.

Artificial nails – For Perfect Nails Every Day

By Dr Bianca Tavares

False or artificial nails are the perfect solution for many "nail events" in your life. They are a perfect solution for replacing a broken nail. They are great as a temporary fix until your own nails grow out. And they are there – instantly. What is more, they can be applied yourself at home and, provided you select the right size and do something creative to eliminate the plastic look, they can appear entirely natural and convincing.

False nails can be applied professionally in the salon, or you can apply them at home using widely-available nail enhancement kits. They come with their own adhesive and are easily cut and shaped to the style you want.

So, assuming you want to fit the nails yourself, how do you get started? Here are the six simple stages:

1. First, clean and dry your own natural nails. Then file and shape them in preparation for attaching the artificial nails.
2. Then – very important – choose the right size artificial nail for each finger. File the edges if necessary to get an exact fit.
3. Now spread a thin layer of nail adhesive over the whole area of your natural nail that will be in contact with the artificial nail.
4. Position the artificial nail such that it is very close to, but not touching, the cuticle. Then apply a light pressure to the top for a short time to allow the glue to take hold and set.
5. Once the nail is set firmly in position, file off any rough edges.
6. Apply two coats of nail varnish of the color you require, then finish off with a layer of topcoat to seal

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it.

It's recommended that you don't wear artificial nails for more than a few weeks at a time – say a month maximum. Then remove them and give your natural nails a chance to breathe and refresh their growth.

It's also important that you always use proper nail adhesive and never just ordinary glue you might find around the house.

To remove artificial nails, soak them in a non-acetone polish remover until they start to dissolve and come away. It's very important to avoid acetone and other chemicals with an acetone-base. They will damage the surface of the nail, affecting the shine and also thin and weaken the nail plate.

Also, don't try to peel off the artificial nails without first soaking them in polish remover, and certainly never, ever try to break them. This could result in serious damage to your own nails below.

Following the simple steps and guidelines given here, wearing artificial nails will be not only a simple and trouble-free process but also a delight to behold!

You can find more information on

acrylic nails

by Bianca Tavares in her regular contributions at

Makeup Girl's Makeup Tips

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