

Protecting Yourself at the Nail Salon

What you need to know...

Most nail salons work hard to make sure their clients enjoy a safe service. However, there are ways that infections can be spread if proper steps of prevention are not followed.

How infections can be spread...

Germs that cause infections can be spread when an infected client's skin comes into contact with a staff member's hands, tools or work surfaces during service. If hands are not properly washed or if tools and work surfaces are not properly disinfected after each client, germs that cause infection can spread. Germs spread by touching the client's skin directly, or a cut, tear or open wound on the client's skin.

When to avoid spa services...

When your skin is irritated, broken or infected, your risk of getting an infection increases. Under these circumstances, we recommend that you avoid getting a nail salon service on the parts of your body where you have a cut, tear or open wound, a rash or a skin infection, irritated or severely dry or chapped skin.

What about re-using tools...

Single use tools are meant to be **used by one client only and then discarded**. This is because they cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected between each use. Examples include emery boards, wooden cuticle pushers, nail buffers, pedicure razor blades and foam toe separators.

There are other tools that can be properly cleaned and disinfected **between each client**, and can therefore be used more than once. Examples include nail clippers, nippers, foot paddles, hand baths and foot baths.

Things to look for at the nail salon...

- All work areas are clean, well lit and organized
- Tools, work surfaces and equipment are in good repair (i.e. no rust, cracks, etc.)
- Tools, equipment and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between each client
- Single use items are thrown away between each client
- Tools and supplies are stored in a clean area (i.e. in covered containers)
- Creams and lotions are used in a way that does not contaminate the original product (i.e. used in a pump, no fingers in jars)
- Clean sheets, paper liners, towels, etc. are used for each client
- Workers wash their hands before and after each client
- Each worker must be a registered apprentice or certified journeyperson in the trade of Esthetician **OR** Nail Technician, **OR** hold a temporary permit. Every worker must have official documentation on their person at all times. This can be an Apprenticeship Pocket Card ID **OR** a Certificate of Qualification **OR** a Temporary Permit.

Four tips for protecting yourself...

Know what to look for at the nail salon. See above checklist, and know what you should look for before you book a nail salon service.

Look around and ask questions. While at the nail salon, take the time to observe hygienic practices and ask the staff any questions you may have.

Make an informed decision. If you are uncomfortable with what you see or hear, don't be afraid to refuse the service. You have the right to make sure you receive a safe service with clean tools and clean hands.

Report concerns or complaints. If you are concerned about an establishment's cleaning and disinfection practices, you can contact Manitoba's Health Protection Unit at 204-945-4204, or by email at healthprotection@gov.mb.ca. All concerns and complaints are kept confidential.