



# HEALTHY SKIN, HEALTHY NAIL TECHNICIANS

*A RESOURCE FOR MANITOBA NAIL SALON WORKERS*

This booklet is for nail technicians. It will help you learn more about how nail salon work may affect your health and give you information about lowering some of the risks to your health while you are working in a nail salon. This booklet includes:

- questions you may have about skin health
- information about the chemicals you work with;
- resources if you need additional help or information.

Because of the possible risks to your health, it is important that you protect yourself. This booklet gives you some ideas about how to do this.

This resource is available online in English and Vietnamese at:  
**[www.mflohc.mb.ca](http://www.mflohc.mb.ca)**

Access the resources for nail salon workers in English, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean created by the original project in Toronto at:  
**[www.pqwchc.org/nails](http://www.pqwchc.org/nails)**



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**PARKDALE  
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Funding provided by



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## How can nail salon work affect my skin?

Your skin can become red, dry, cracked, scaly, swollen, tight, blistering, darkened, itchy, and/or painful and can affect your ability to work and enjoy daily activities. These effects can appear quickly, or after months or years of working at a salon.



### Chemicals

Chemicals can get onto your skin directly through contact or indirectly through air. These chemicals are found in nail polishes, fingernail glues, artificial nails, removers, and disinfectants.



### Water

Nail salon work involves using lots of water. This keeps your hands wet and can also damage your skin.

# How can I protect my skin?



## **Wear gloves and clothing that covers exposed skin.**

- Wear nitrile gloves, not latex or vinyl.
- Change your gloves at least every 20 minutes, and with every customer.
- Wear cotton gloves under your nitrile gloves. These gloves are washable and reusable.
- Do not use gloves with holes or that are no longer clean.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants or long skirts to cover your arms and legs.



## **Use safer products.**

- Use products without formaldehyde (also known as formalin, methylene glycol), phthalates, and toluene.
- Use nail polish removers without acetone.
- Use nail polish thinners without toluene or methyl ethyl ketone.
- Read the Material Safety Data Sheet of the products, ask your employer where this is located or look online.



## **Keep your skin clean**

- Wash between serving customers, before eating and when you think you have touched any chemicals.
- Wash your hands and arms for 15- 20 seconds per area.
- Wash using a mild liquid soap and warm (not hot) water.
- Dry your hands fully.



## **Be careful when taking off dirty gloves.**

- Avoid touching the chemicals on the gloves when you are taking them off.



## Reduce your chemical exposure.

- Close bottles when not in use.
- Put garbage with chemicals into a closed bag, then throw into a trash can with a lid. Keep the lid closed.
- Take work breaks.
- Do not eat or drink at workstations or near chemicals.
- Increase air circulation by opening the front doors and using fans.
- Avoid wearing jewelry that can trap chemicals and water.



## Look at your skin and check for changes.

- Regularly look at your skin for any changes or problems like redness, dryness, cracks, swelling, or blisters.
- Talk to a doctor as soon as you see changes in your skin.
- The longer you wait, the harder it gets to treat it.
- Tell your doctor about your job as a nail salon worker.



## Moisturize your skin.

- Put cream or Vaseline on after washing hands, after work, and before bed.
- Here are some recommended lotions/creams:
  - **Moisturizers:** Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream or Lotion, Cerave Moisturizing Cream or Lotion, Vaseline Creamy Problem Skin Therapy, and Cliniderm Soothing Cream
  - **Hand care:** Prevex, Cetaphil Barrier Cream, Cetaphil Restoraderm, and Cerave Moisturizing Cream.



## You may be thinking...



**"I think I have a skin problem that is related to my work in a nail salon, but I'm not sure what to do about it."**

Go see your family doctor or go to a community health centre/walk-in clinic. Tell them that you are worried about how your job is affecting your skin. Ask to see a dermatologist. If your doctor needs more information they can contact Occupational Health Centre (204-949-0811).



**"Following all the tips to protecting my hands would take too long and affect how I do my job."**

The tips will become natural the more you do them. Plus they will help you stay healthy!



**"I have some skin changes, but it's not bothering me right now."**

Skin problems can start out mild, but the longer you wait the harder it will be to treat. Tell a doctor as soon as you notice skin changes.



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**“It’s hard to understand chemical names and labels, since they are in English.”**

Ask your co-workers for help. They might have had the same problem, and know more about the products used at the salon.

Some free programs provide an opportunity for immigrants to improve their English Skills in order to settle in Manitoba, go to school or get a job. For example: **Winnipeg School Division’s Adult EAL Program:** <https://www.winnipegssd.ca/Education%20Services/EquityDiversity/adult-EAL/Pages/default.aspx> **WELARC - Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre:** [www.welarc.net](http://www.welarc.net) and **Winnipeg Adult Education Centre:** [www.winnipegssd.ca/schools/WinnipegAdultEdCentre](http://www.winnipegssd.ca/schools/WinnipegAdultEdCentre)



**“The salon owner hasn’t talked about the skin protection steps in this booklet.”**

Owners also want a healthy salon. Consider speaking with them and showing them this booklet. If you would rather talk to someone outside of your workplace, consider contacting one of the local organizations listed at the end of this booklet.







**“I don’t know where to get gloves.”**

Most pharmacies carry nitrile and cotton gloves. Ask the pharmacist where to look for them.



**“I can’t avoid doing what the customer wants.”**

Talk to your customers about using safer products and wearing protective gear – it means keeping them healthy too!



**“I’m worried about the working conditions in my salon, what can I do?”**

If you think your work environment is dangerous or that you are not being treated fairly as a worker, you can report this to Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Branch.



**“Where can I get more information on the hazards in nail salon work and how to protect myself?”**

Local organizations like Occupational Health Centre, Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Branch and SAFE Work Manitoba.

Federal government workplace health and safety information (e.g. Health Canada on cosmetics product safety).

Some international groups also provide excellent information on nail salons (U.S. Department of Labour, California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, and U.K. Health and Safety Executive.)



# For more help and information:

## WORK, ENVIRONMENT ORGANIZATIONS:

### Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Branch

200-401 York Ave.

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P8

Tel: 204-945-3446

[www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety)

Information and enforcement of workplace health and safety laws and workplace investigations. Call to anonymously report unsafe work, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

### SAFE Work Manitoba

16-363 Broadway

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1P2

Tel: 204-957-7233

Toll free: 1-855-957-7233

[www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com)

Provides prevention education, safety programming, consulting and direction to create a culture of safety for all Manitobans.

## HEALTH SERVICES:

### Occupational Health Centre

102-275 Broadway

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4M6

Tel: 204-949-0811

Fax: 204-956-0848

[www.mflohc.mb.ca](http://www.mflohc.mb.ca)

A community health centre with a focus on worker's health. Make an appointment with doctor to if you have a work-related health concern. You can also get more information and help for health and safety concerns in your workplace.

### Lung Association of Manitoba

Room 204 - 825 Sherbrook Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3A1M5

Tel: (204) 774-5501

Toll free: 1-888-262-5864

[www.mb.lung.ca](http://www.mb.lung.ca)

Provides information about lung diseases, air quality, smoking, and other lung health matters

### Family Doctor Connection Program - Manitoba Health

Tel: 204-786-7111

Provides names of family doctors who are accepting patients



### **Manitoba Health Protection Unit**

Tel: 204-945-4204

Email: [healthprotection@gov.mb.ca](mailto:healthprotection@gov.mb.ca)

Contact to report concerns about a salon's cleaning and disinfection practices

### **Health Canada Cosmetic Safety**

[www.Canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/cosmetics.html](http://www.Canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/cosmetics.html)

Information on Cosmetic safety, advertising, labelling, ingredients and regulation, report an incident, read about cosmetic products.

### **California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative**

[www.cahealthynailsalons.org](http://www.cahealthynailsalons.org)

Works to improve the health, safety and rights of the nail and beauty care workforce to achieve a healthier, more sustainable and just industry. (Not a Canadian resource. Some information may not apply to Winnipeg, includes information in Vietnamese language)

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS:**

### **Winnipeg School Division's Adult EAL Program**

<https://www.winnipegsd.ca/Education%20Services/EquityDiversity/adult-EAL/Pages/default.aspx>

Provides an opportunity for immigrants to improve their English skills in order to settle in Manitoba

### **WELARC: Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre**

[www.welarc.net](http://www.welarc.net)

Helps newcomers to Canada improve their communication skills in English or French and provides testing with the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT) to assess English skills

### **Winnipeg Adult Education Centre**

<https://www.winnipegsd.ca/schools/WinnipegAdultEdCentre/Pages/Default.aspx>

Provides opportunities for adults to continue their high school education in an adult atmosphere, i.e. English as an Additional Language Program (EAL)



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This booklet has been adapted for Manitoba from the original version produced in Toronto by Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (PQWCHC) and the Healthy Nail Salon Network with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Labour and The Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease. The Manitoba version has been supported by a grant from the Research and Workplace Innovation Program of The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba.

Our thanks to PQWCHC and the Healthy Nail Salon Network (Toronto) for their permission to adapt the original resource, and to faculty at the Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease for their help in creating it.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the Nail Salon Workers Project (Toronto) and do not necessarily reflect those of any of our funders.



Access the resources for nail salon workers created by the original project in Toronto at <http://tiny.cc/yj3gbz>



**Facebook:** Healthy Nail Salon Network (Toronto)



**Twitter:** @TOHealthyNails (Toronto)



**Contact us at:** [mflohc@mflohc.mb.ca](mailto:mflohc@mflohc.mb.ca) (Manitoba)  
[nailsalonproject@pqwchc.ca](mailto:nailsalonproject@pqwchc.ca) (Toronto)



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