



GEL MANICURES: DERMATOLOGISTS SHARE TIPS TO KEEP NAILS HEALTHY

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. (Feb. 2, 2016) — Although gel manicures can be beautiful and long-lasting, they can be tough on nails. According to dermatologists from the American Academy of Dermatology, gel manicures can cause nail brittleness, peeling and cracking, and repeated use can increase the risk for skin cancer and premature skin aging on the hands.

“Gel manicures have many great benefits, but there are downsides,” said board-certified dermatologist Rebecca Clare Tung, MD, FAAD, associate professor of dermatology, Loyola University Medical Center. “Since gel nail polish can only be sealed to the nail using ultraviolet lamps, and since there is no regulation of nail lamp exposure, skin cancer is a serious concern. Another concern has to do with using acetone to remove the gel nail polish, as acetone is very drying to the nails and irritating to the surrounding skin.”

To keep your nails healthy before, during and after gel manicures, Dr. Tung recommends the following tips:

1. **Be proactive with your manicurist:** Ask if tools are sterilized, and look around to make sure he or she is cleaning and disinfecting tools after every client. In addition, never let your manicurist push or cut your cuticle, as this could lead to inflammation and infection.
2. **Consider traditional nail polish instead of gel polish:** This is especially important if you experience recurring nail problems or are allergic to acetone, as acetone is required to remove gel polish.
3. **Wear sunscreen:** Before getting a gel manicure, apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to your hands to prevent skin cancer and premature skin aging. This will help protect your skin from the ultraviolet radiation used to seal gel nail polish to the nail. Another option is to put on dark, opaque gloves with the fingertips snipped off before your nail polish is applied.
4. **Don't pick gel nail polish:** When the color begins to come off, don't pick at the polish or use other nails or tools to remove it. Instead, make an appointment with your manicurist to have the polish removed.
5. **Only soak your fingertips in acetone:** When having the nail polish removed, only soak your fingertips in acetone instead of your whole hands or fingers to protect the surrounding skin. Another option is to use cotton balls to remove the polish. Soak the cotton balls in acetone and apply them to you nails by wrapping small pieces of aluminum foil around your fingertips. This will ensure that only your nails come into contact with the acetone. After about 15 minutes, the nail polish should come right off.

To care for your nails in between gel manicures, Dr. Tung recommends the following:

1. **Take a nail polish holiday:** Try not to wear nail polish for one to two weeks or longer. This will allow your nails time to repair.
2. **Rehydrate your nails:** Between polishes, apply a moisturizing product, such as petroleum jelly, to your nails and cuticles several times daily. This will minimize brittleness and help prevent your nails from chipping.

“As is the case with most things, moderation is the key when it comes to gel manicures,” said Dr. Tung. “Consider getting a gel manicure for special occasions only, and see a

News Release

- more -

American Academy of
Dermatology

930 East Woodfield Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60173

Main: 847.330.0230

Fax: 847.330.8907

Website: www.aad.org

Gel Manicures: Tips for Healthy Nails

board-certified dermatologist if you notice any unusual changes to your nails or have a persistent nail problem.”

These tips are demonstrated in “[Gel Manicures: Tips for Healthy Nails](#),” a video posted to the AAD website and [YouTube channel](#). This video is part of the AAD’s “Video of the Month” series, which offers tips people can use to properly care for their skin, hair and nails. A new video in the series posts to the AAD website and YouTube channel each month.

#

Jennifer Allyn
(847) 240-1730
jallyn@aad.org

Nicole DiVito
(847) 240-1746
ndivito@aad.org

Amanda Jacobs
(847) 240-1714
ajacobs@aad.org

Kara Jilek
(847) 240-1701
kjilek@aad.org

Headquartered in Schaumburg, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology, founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 18,000 physicians worldwide, the AAD is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the AAD at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org. Follow the AAD on [Facebook](#) (American Academy of Dermatology), [Twitter](#) (@AADskin), or [YouTube](#) (AcademyofDermatology).