

Seeking safe pedicures



SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSIS

Most healthcare professionals agree that pedicures are unsafe and lead to infection and the spread of disease. Convincing patients of this is a whole other story and one that is likely to fall on deaf ears. The very idea of a pedicure is a monthly or fortnightly summer must for many patients and pointing out that the onychomycosis under their toenail probably originated from the foot spa they were luxuriating in a week ago is probably not going to change anything.

If lecturing won't help, the best you can do is to at least prepare your patients and educate them as to what they should expect from their local salon and the standards necessary for the treatment to be truly beneficial for their feet.

Key points for patient education:

- Advise the patient to ask how tools are sterilised — if tools are not sterilised using an autoclave, their safety cannot be guaranteed.
- Patients should avoid pedicures if they have cuts or sores on their feet or legs. This includes having shaved or waxed during the 24 hour period before a pedicure.
- Cuticle should never be cut, only moisturised, and nails should be cleaned gently with a brush rather than by digging metal instruments at the hyponychium.
- If the patient has a history of contact dermatitis around the nails and/or eyes, they should request the use of a nail varnish for sensitive skin. All professional salons should stock such varnishes.



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