



## Let's Talk About Manicures and Pedicures



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**W**e have long known the luxury of a pedicure and manicure, but did you know there are health benefits, too? Properly maintaining your feet, cutting, clipping and cleaning of the nails, prevents

nails from growing inward and causing infection. The elimination of dirt and bacteria from your feet will also help prevent nail diseases and disorders and helps eliminate foot odor.

Exfoliation, or the sloughing off of dead skin cells, prevents the cells from accumulating and causing bunions or corns, which can be painful. Removal of the dead skins cells also encourages newer skin cell growth, which creates a smoother, more appealing foot and hand.

The most enjoyable part of a spa manicure or pedicure is the massage. The lotion and/or oils used in the massage moisturize the newly exfoliated skin, and massaging promotes circulation in the calves and feet. It can reduce foot pain from being on one's feet all day and can help maintain the health and performance of the muscles. It can also help those sore hand and finger muscles. And let's face it — a nice time out for this pampering can reduce stress.

### Now, What You Need To Know About the Hidden Dangers of Manicures and Pedicures

To date, there is no government agency acting on the public's behalf; nobody checks businesses offering manicures and pedicures, and nobody checks the infection control methods used by these businesses unless there is a complaint from someone that has developed a problem after treatment. As a person utilizing esthetics and spa services, you must be vigilant!

There are several types of issues that can arise from inadequate infection control methods. Some of them can be quite minor but others can be life-threatening.

**Mycobacterium Fortuitum** is highly infectious and can breed in pedicure footbaths which are not disinfected properly. If a victim is exposed to

**Mycobacterium Fortuitum** during a pedicure and becomes infected, serious skin evulsions will develop and spread. These are painful and may include boils, scabs, scars and pus-filled blisters.

**Hepatitis B and C and fungal infections** can be spread with infected instruments such as nail files, foot basins and buffers.

**MRSA: Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus**, an antibiotic-resistant infection, that in some cases have resulted in the amputation of limbs due to ineffectiveness of antibiotics, and in some cases, even death. MRSA can be spread through the sharing of infected nail files or other nail implements.

Here are a few suggestions on what to look for in all businesses supplying esthetics and spa services:

- Ask the receptionist at time of booking to verify that all service providers are accredited in their field.
- Check into the sterilization techniques used. Many salons and spas use UV sterilizers to sterilize tools. These do not kill bacteria. All non-disposable instruments that are used must be sterilized correctly in order to protect you from what can be very serious health complications.

Solutions used for sanitization and sterilization must be a hospital-grade disinfectant that also includes protection against HIV, hepatitis and tuberculosis. Sterilizing tools in an autoclave is the optimum method.

These are just a couple of the things to ask about. Keep these points in mind when choosing your spa pampering, and your experience will be safe and relaxing. FLSW