

ARE YOU CONCERNED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO MMA?

Indications That MMA has been used on you:

OPERATOR OFTEN WEAR MASKS

Why don't they offer you a mask?

OPERATORS OR OWNERS ARE SECRETIVE ABOUT BRAND NAMES.

Enquiries should be answered in a professional and educated manner.

UNUSUALLY LOW PRICES

- MMA costs around 25% of what the safe acrylic liquid costs.

DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT ODOUR FROM REGULAR NAIL ACRYLIC.

THIS PRODUCT YELLOWES ON YOUR NAIL.

IT CAN TAKE UP TO 2 HOURS TO BE REMOVED SAFELY compared to 30-35 minutes,

OFTEN IT IS APPLIED WITH A VERY LARGE BRUSH AND DURING THIS APPLICATION THE LIQUID DRIPS OVER YOUR SKIN, WHICH OFTEN CAUSES ALLERGIC REACTIONS.

They are clearly putting \$\$ ahead of quality, sanitization and customer service.

Electric file use should NEVER be damaging or painful.

Please feel free to ask for information inside regarding this problem- or look on the Internet.

ARTIFICIAL SURFACE WILL NOT RELEASE.

Usually they are ripped off the natural nail surface with great pain and damage to the natural nail plate

**AT GLAM WE DO NOT USE
Methyl Methacrylate – MMA**

AND TAKE THE QUALITY, SERVICE AND SAFETY OF OUR CLIENTS VERY SERIOUSLY.

REPORTER: LAURA SPARKES Channel 7 October 2008

They're cheap, quick and can always fit you in. But what toxic chemicals are you breathing in and what infections are lurking?

Nail salons, are now as much a part of any shopping centre as a McDonalds outlet. As their numbers surge, so to do the shortcuts, the dangers. As yourself, why is it appropriate for the staff to wear masks and not the public? The tests we've just carried out unmask the shocking truth.

Beautician and nail technician Mindy Hamilton is President of the Australian Fingernail Association. She points her carefully manicured finger at the salons that use a cheaper toxic nail acrylic.

"We get a lot of calls from people who have been to those places who have had really bad nail damage, some have got infections."

Nail acrylic is used to harden nails; it contains a highly toxic banned chemical called Methyl methacrylate or MMA.

"They buy it in huge drums at a quarter of the price of the good quality EMA, which is "ethyl methacrylate" says Mindy.

EMA and MMA do the same job but the cheaper MMA is far more toxic and does its job too well. Once its on, its extremely difficult to get off and leaves irreparable damage to the natural nail."

"You cant remove it with a normal file, you have to use an electric file, and if they're not trained correctly, they can do more damage to the natural nail... if they hold the electric file on the wrong angle they can cause what we call rings of fire, which is big red rings around every nail" says Mindy. But this is just the beginning of the problem.

"Certainly respiratory problems, eye, nose, throat irritation are typical symptoms even at low concentrations." Environmental scientist Peter Dingle from Perth's Murdoch University says MMA hits you at all angles, not only when you breathe it in but also when it's put on your skin.

"They cause a lot of problems in terms of irritation, redness of the skin, swelling up of the skin and sensitisation." A chemical information leaflet from the Federal Department of Health's Chemical Notification Scheme says "...even low exposures to MMA may lead to sensitisation...."

"The thing with clients if you're going in there on a regular basis getting your nails redone and redone and redone you're repeatedly exposing yourself to chemicals that are toxic and over the time they're having an effect on your body" says Dr Dingle.

MMA has already been banned in 30 states in the US, Canada and New Zealand. The UK is planning a ban in the near future but we're lagging behind. Here it's allowed to be diluted into cosmetic products at just 1 percent of the total contents but qualified nail technicians believe many cheap nail salons are using illegal products with greater concentrations of MMA.

Nail and beauty wholesaler Karen Peppercorn runs GNB Salon Supplies. She wanted to expose dodgy suppliers that were selling products with more than 1 percent MMA. So she bought a bottle of acrylic nail that contained MMA in its listed ingredients. We tested it and our results were horrifying. The liquid was 99 percent MMA making it an illegal substance. Karen was furious and revealed the fact on a nail industry website.

But unfortunately this sorry story doesn't end here. Helen Webb and Ora Lugton both believe they picked up nasty fungal infections in their toes from cheap nail salons.

"It's extremely unpleasant to have it and it looks extremely unpleasant and you just can't get rid of it, it's really hard to get rid of and it spreads" says Helen.

"They're not autoclaving their instruments and many are not looking after basic infection control standards that everybody else is looking after" says Brendan Brown. He is the president of the Australian Podiatry Association and is alarmed at the rising incidence in complaints against nail salons. "We're seeing people get cut, were seeing people get more infections in their toenails, so fungal infections, and even skin infections in their toe nails and that's of real concern."

His autoclave machine costs \$15,000. He uses sterilised instruments for each new patient. When it comes to razors, again a new one for each patient. He's concerned that unskilled nail technicians are also using this implement.

"Many of them are bordering on exactly what we would do here unfortunately that comes with its certain risks, you've got someone who has trained for as little as two days versus someone that's trained for four years" adds Brendan.

For Helen and Ora, they've had to spend close to \$100 in fungal ointments. While Ora's has disappeared, Helen's is persisting.

Experts say because the industry is unregulated with no policing whatsoever, nail salons will continue to flourish without fear of being caught out, both in terms of unsafe infection control and the use of MMA. They call for the product to be completely banned.

"We need to act as soon as possible because no matter what we know people are being exposed to it" says Dr Dingle. "I think the only way to tackle it is through the Health Department through the local councils and educating their rangers to know exactly what they're looking out for when they go to these salons" says Karen.