



# Manicuring

## HOW CAN CHEMICALS USED IN MANICURING GET INTO YOUR BODY?

### Skin and Eye Contact

- Some chemicals may harm your skin directly and/or be absorbed into your bloodstream.
- You may splash chemicals into your eyes.
- You may accidentally touch your eyes with chemicals on your hands.
- Chemical vapors or dust in the air may get into your eyes.

### Breathing

- You may breathe in chemical vapors through your nose or mouth.
- When filing nails, you may breathe in harmful dust.

### Swallowing

- If chemicals (including dust) are on your hands or in the air, they may contaminate your food or drink.

## HOW CAN CHEMICALS IN MANICURING PRODUCTS AFFECT YOUR BODY?

Different chemicals affect your body in different ways, depending on the *amount* of the chemical in the product, how *harmful* it is, the *length of time* you are exposed, and other factors. Not every person has the same reaction to a chemical. Some people experience health effects when they work with a product, others never do. Health problems that may be caused by chemicals in manicuring products include:

**Central nervous system effects:** Headache, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness, restlessness.

**Nose and throat irritation:** Runny nose, scratchy throat, burning, itching.

**Skin irritation and dermatitis:** redness, itching, skin rash, or dry skin that cracks and flakes — most common on the hands and arms.

**Burns:** Chemicals in some manicuring products can cause burns if they get on your skin or in your eyes.

**Eye irritation:** Redness, burning, watering, itching.

**Lung irritation:** Breathing difficulty, shortness of breath, coughing, swelling of lung tissue.

**Allergies:** Stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, asthma, dermatitis. If you become sensitive to a particular chemical, you will have an allergic reaction every time you use it.

**Cancer:** Studies with laboratory animals and humans have shown that chemicals found in some manicuring products can cause cancer. This is not a common health problem.

**Reproductive problems:** Studies with laboratory animals have shown that chemicals found in some manicuring products can cause reproductive problems, such as birth defects and infertility. This is not common.

## What harmful chemicals are sometimes found in manicuring products?

### WARNING! EXPOSURE TO THESE CHEMICALS MAY CAUSE:

**Acetone:** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Central nervous system effects. Skin irritation and dermatitis.

**Camphor:** Eye, skin, nose, mouth and throat irritation, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, dizziness.

**Dibutyl phthalate (DBP):** Nausea and irritated eyes, skin, nose, mouth, and throat. Long-term exposures to high concentrations may cause other serious effects.

**Ethyl acetate or butyl acetate:** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Central nervous system effects. Breathing problems. Skin irritation and dermatitis.

**Ethyl cyanoacrylate:** Eye, mucous membrane, and skin irritation.

**Ethyl methacrylate:** Eye, skin and respiratory tract irritation, and skin sensitization.

**Formaldehyde (Formalin):** Eye, nose, throat, and lung irritation. Watery, burning eyes. Central nervous system effects. Skin irritation and dermatitis. Breathing problems (such as asthma, coughing, and wheezing). Cancer with long-term use.

**Glycol ethers (a generic term for a group of chemicals):** Reproductive problems (birth defects and infertility shown in lab animal tests). Possible other effects depending on the specific chemical.

**Isopropyl acetate:** Sleepiness, and irritated eyes, nose, and throat.

**Lanolin:** Skin irritation and dermatitis.

**Methyl ethyl ketone (MEK):** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Central nervous system effects.

**Ortho-phenylphenol (OPP):** Eye, nose, and throat irritation.

Abdominal pain. Coughing and/or shortness of breath.

**Quaternary ammonium compounds (such as benzalkonium chloride):** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Breathing problems (such as asthma and shortness of breath).

**Sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide:** Eye, nose, throat, and lung irritation. Skin and eye burns. Skin irritation and dermatitis. Severe irritation of mouth, throat, and stomach if swallowed.

**Toluene:** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Central nervous system effects. Skin irritation and dermatitis. Reproductive problems, damage to liver and/or kidneys.

**Xylene:** Eye, nose, and throat irritation. Central nervous system effects. Skin irritation and dermatitis. Reproductive problems.

Not all manicuring products contain these chemicals, and some may contain harmful chemicals not listed above. Always check the product's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for more information.

## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CHEMICAL HAZARDS?

When you work with chemicals in manicuring products, it is important to take steps to protect your health.

### Avoid harmful chemicals

- For any product used, read the label and Safety Data Sheet to know what is in the product and its health effects.
- Use products with the least hazardous chemicals in them when possible.
- Don't use products that contain formaldehyde, toluene, and dibutyl phthalates.

### Use safe work practices

- Keep containers closed when you're not using them so the product doesn't spill or get into the air.
- Check that all containers of chemicals are properly labeled of their contents.
- Don't eat or drink in your work area as your food or drink may get contaminated.
- Wash your hands after working with chemicals, even if you wore gloves.

### Ventilate the room

- Always work in a well-ventilated area. If there's no ventilation system, open windows and doors to bring in fresh air from outside.
- Use a manicuring table with a built-in ventilation system. The hood pulls dust and vapors away from your breathing area.
- Do not rely on fans. They only blow dust and vapors around the room — they don't get rid of them.

### Use protective equipment

- Wear gloves designed to protect your skin from the particular chemicals you're using. There are different types of gloves for protection from different chemicals, check the gloves package to make sure you are using the right type of glove for maximum protection.
- Wear a NIOSH-approved dust mask to protect yourself from dust when you file nails. Remember: These do not protect you from chemical vapors.
- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from nail clippings.
- Wear safety goggles when mixing chemicals to protect your eyes from splashes.

### Know your rights as a worker

- Employers must provide workers with Safety Data Sheets if requested.
- Employers must train workers on the hazards of the chemicals they are working with and how to protect themselves from the hazards.

### Report any health problems to your employer and doctor

- Speak up if you are experiencing symptoms of health effects so your employer can help alleviate the problem and let other employees know.
- Seek advice from your doctor on how serious your issues are and how they should be handled.
- You have the right to report health hazards to Cal/OSHA by filing a complaint.

