



UV Lamps and Nail Salons: What You Need to Know

Is your manicure drying method safe? Here's the latest thinking on the use of UV (ultraviolet) or LED (light-emitting diode) lamps in the manicure process:

Ultraviolet radiation-emitting nail lamps – called UV or LED lamps – can be found in almost all nail salons these days. During a standard manicure, the lamps are optional and help to speed up drying time. For gel manicures, UV lamp use is required in order for the polish to set.

UV rays are emitted in both UV and LED lamps. The type of UV called UVA is predominant in these fixtures. UVA rays have been linked to skin cancer, as well as premature aging. While exposure time is short, repeated UV lamp exposure can lead to DNA mutations, which in turn can lead to carcinogenesis (cancer formation).

More research needs to be done to determine the risks of developing skin cancers as a result of UV lamps at nail salons. For now, however, we suggest applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher 15 minutes before UV lamp exposure. Apply the sunscreen to your hands and feet if you're getting both a manicure and a pedicure.

To really play it safe, allow your nails to air-dry, and avoid the use of the lamp altogether.

Reference:

Wilson, J., Makara, J. 2016. *Need for sun cream with your manicure? Dangers of UV nail dryers.* Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, June 2016