

How to Safely Use Nail Care Products

Have you ever thought about the safety of your beauty products? The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has. Their consumer updates include practical health and wellness tips.

Manicures and pedicures can be pretty. The cosmetic products used, such as nail polishes and nail polish removers, also must be safe—and are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

You can do your part to stay safe and look polished, too by following all labeled directions and paying attention to any warning statements listed on these products.

Cosmetic ingredients (except most color additives) and products, including nail products, do not need FDA approval before they go on the market. But these products are required to be safe when used as intended. Note that nail products intended to treat medical problems are classified as drugs and do require FDA approval.

Cosmetic nail care products also must include any instructions or warnings needed to use them safely. For example: Some nail products can catch fire easily so you should not expose them to flames (such as from a lit cigarette) or heat sources (such as a curling iron). Some can injure your eyes, so you should avoid this exposure. Some should only be used in areas with good air circulation (ventilation). Some ingredients can be harmful if swallowed, so these products should never be consumed by any person or pet.

Also know that retail cosmetics such as those sold in stores or online must list ingredients in the order of decreasing amounts. If you're concerned about certain ingredients, you can check the label and avoid using products with those ingredients.

For example, some nail hardeners and nail polishes may contain formaldehyde, which can cause skin irritation or an allergic reaction. And acrylics, used in some artificial nails and sometimes in nail polishes, can cause allergic reactions.

The bottom line? Read the labels of cosmetic products and follow all instructions. And if you go to a salon for a manicure or pedicure, make sure the space has good ventilation. Nail salon practices are regulated by the states, and not the FDA.

If you have questions about whether certain nail products are right for you, talk to your health care provider.

