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# Nail



Nail products like polishes, removers, and acrylics can contain chemicals linked to serious health concerns including cancer, reproductive harm, respiratory harm, and neurological harm.

Nail salon workers, who are primarily women of color, may suffer serious, dangerous impacts to maternal and fetal health as well as respiratory harm and reproductive damage because of their chronic exposure to toxic chemicals in nail products.

## Science

Professional nail salon workers also face temporary health effects, ranging from headaches, dizziness, and cracked skin from exposure to chemicals like toluene, to adverse skin, eye, and throat reactions from acrylates (ethyl acrylate, ethyl methacrylate, and methyl methacrylate) found in artificial nail products like acrylic nails.<sup>[1]</sup>

[Learn More > \(https://www.bcpp.org/resource/california-professional-cosmetics-labeling-act-ab-2775-for-safer-salons/\)](https://www.bcpp.org/resource/california-professional-cosmetics-labeling-act-ab-2775-for-safer-salons/)

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[1] NICNAS. Inventory multi-tiered assessment and prioritization for 2-propenoic acid, 2-methyl-,methyl ester. Australian Department of Health and Ageing. 2013. Available online: <https://chemycal.com/dap/files/Guidance/201408-NICNAS.pdf> (<https://chemycal.com/dap/files/Guidance/201408-NICNAS.pdf>).

## Campaign

As a result of public pressure mounted by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, nail giant OPI agreed to remove the most toxic ingredients from its nail polishes, including dibutyl phthalate, toluene and formaldehyde also known as the “toxic trio.”

The [Cosmetic Safety for Communities of Color and Professional Salon Workers Act of 2021](https://www.bcpp.org/resource/cosmetic-safety-for-communities-of-color-and-professional-salon-workers-act-of-2021/) (<https://www.bcpp.org/resource/cosmetic-safety-for-communities-of-color-and-professional-salon-workers-act-of-2021/>) in U.S. Congress would create cosmetic safety protections for women of color and professional hair, nail and beauty salon workers – two vulnerable populations who are most at risk of unsafe exposures because of the toxic chemicals in the products marketed to them or commonly found in their workplaces. Part of the larger [Safer Beauty Bill Package](https://www.bcpp.org/resource/safer-beauty-bill-package-2021/) (<https://www.bcpp.org/resource/safer-beauty-bill-package-2021/>), take action to make beauty and personal care products safer for all!

[Take Action > \(/action-alerts/support-the-safer-beauty-bill-package/\)](/action-alerts/support-the-safer-beauty-bill-package/)

## Products of Concern

- Nail polish
- Nail polish hardeners
- Nail polish thinners
- Plasticizers

- Nail polish removers

## Chemicals of Concern

**Acrylates** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/acrylates/>)

**Benzophenone & Related Compounds**  
(<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/benzophenone/>)

**Carbon Black** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/carbon-black/>)

**Carcinogens in Cosmetics** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/known-carcinogens/>)

**Formaldehyde And Formaldehyde-Releasing Preservatives**  
(<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/formaldehyde/>)

**Fragrance** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/fragrance/>)

**Hydroquinone** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/hydroquinone/>)

**Lead And Other Heavy Metals** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/lead-and-other-heavy-metals/>)

**Nail Polish Removers** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/nail-polish-removers/>)

**Octinoxate** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/octinoxate/>)

**Phenoxyethanol** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/phenoxyethanol/>)

**Phthalates** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/phthalates/>)

**Preservatives** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/preservatives/>)

**Styrene Acrylates Copolymer**  
(<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/styrene-acrylates-copolymer/>)

**Toluene** (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/chemicals/toluene/>)

[View all Chemicals of Concern > \(/chemicals/\)](#)

## Tips

1. **Read Labels:** Check ingredient labels to avoid the above chemicals of concern found in body care products.

2. **Simplify:** Choose products with simpler ingredient lists and fewer synthetic chemicals. Select products that fully disclose their fragrance ingredients by skipping products with “fragrance” on the label.
3. **Minimalist:** Using fewer products is the easiest and cheapest way to reduce your risk by minimizing your exposure to harmful chemicals in cosmetics.
4. **Use an App:** Get Clearya or Think Dirty to find out whether products are toxic as you shop.
5. **Look Beyond:** Since the beauty industry is largely unregulated, there are no legal standards for personal care products that are labeled “clean,” “pure,” “natural,” or “organic.” Look beyond false marketing claims by reading ingredient labels.
6. **DIY:** Many products are easy and fun to make yourself. Plus, you can customize your recipes to match your specific beauty concerns and favorites. Make your own moisturizer, sugar or salt scrub, body oil, and more using simple, organic ingredients.

## Explore other products

- [Anti-Aging \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/anti-aging/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/anti-aging/)
- [Body \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/body/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/body/)
- [Dental \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/dental/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/dental/)
- [Fragrance \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/fragrance/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/fragrance/)
- [Hair \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/hair/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/hair/)
- [Makeup \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/makeup/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/makeup/)
- [Nail \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/nail/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/nail/)
- [Skin Lighteners \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/skin-lighteners/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/skin-lighteners/)
- [Sunscreens \(https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/sunscreens/\)](https://www.safecosmetics.org/products/sunscreens/)

## Looking for a Safer Alternative?

Use Clearya’s app to find non-toxic products! Clearya alerts you to toxics and helps you find safe products.



[Visit Clearya > \(https://www.clearya.com/\)](https://www.clearya.com/)

# Your Action Helps

Together, we can make beauty safer for all.

Take Action Today!

(/take-action/)

**FILTER BY:**

**By Population**



**By Products**



**By Health Concerns**



## Add Impact To Your Inbox

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