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## 8 On Your Side Special Investigation: Nail Salon Dangers

**EXCLUSIVE - ONLY ON NEWSCHANNEL 8**

Wednesday May 14, 2003 5:27pm Reporter: Cindy Morrison Posted By: [Kevin King](#)



Tulsa - If you have fake nails, you may get more than you bargained for. After an intense investigation, our 8 On Your Side team learned a toxin -- wiped out of the beauty industry 25 years ago -- is making a quiet comeback. Cindy Morrison exposes the problem and shows how you can find out if your manicurist is breaking the law and possibly endangering your health.

Acrylic nails look great. But if your nail salon is using a cheap liquid adhesive known as MMA, you could have problems sooner or later.

The FDA issued its first warning back in the 70s for MMA, or Methyl methacrylate. Side effects could include nail damage, even loss, rashes, nerve damage, breathing problems and in the long run damaged kidneys, livers and fetuses.

Oklahoma banned it in nail salons, but we heard some technicians may be using MMA because it's cheap, dries quickly, and makes a stronger acrylic nail.

Is MMA being used in Tulsa? We selected 12 nail salons at random -- from more than 1-hundred in our area. Then we followed inspectors from the State Board of Cosmetology as they collected samples of the liquid adhesive.

"The nails are always good. I never have any problem before," says nail technician Elysia Tong

Inspectors got their sample from what was being used on clients.

"This is what she puts on her station to use and it comes out of this gallon."

One salon owner made no bones about her dislike of MMA, and salons that use it.

"I've been doing nails since 1978 in Tulsa and I take the industry seriously and it does annoy me," says Deborah Lyle. "I think we should all be uniformly responsible product wise and to our clients for their nail health."

We took all twelve samples to the University of Tulsa. TU Chemistry Professor Ken Roberg is running tests to find out if any of the samples contained MMA.

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"As you finished the tests last night, what went through your mind?"

"That's so much MMA for something that's apparently outlawed," Roberts said. "It makes me concerned that people are more interested in making a profit than public health."

And it's apparently far more widespread than any of us thought.

"I expected maybe 1 or 2 at most, but not to see 7 of the 12 have large amounts of MMA," Roberts.

Three of the seven appeared as though MMA had been mixed with an approved liquid adhesive and four of the seven tested as almost exclusively MMA.

We went back to visit those four salons. Lee Nails and Hollywood Nails denied -- off came the MMA. California Nails says it received this liquid adhesive sample to try. It wasn't their usual. The Vietnamese brand doesn't list ingredients.

In fact, manufacturers aren't required to do that, so many salons may unknowingly be using Lam Tong at Art Nails 2 says he thought the product he was using was safe until our test results otherwise.

"Nail salon in Tulsa, almost all nail salon in Tulsa use this product because it's a little bit clearer dries quicker."

But even with problems in seven out of 12, we don't want to overlook the 5 salons that appear to be by the rules. Our tests showed Nails Etc did not use MMA, just as the owner claimed. John Super Nails also had good test results.

"We did use the right thing because we followed the procedure, what we learned from the what we learned from reporters," Nguyen said. "We learned how to use the correct liquid."

What should you look for?

- If a salon is offering very inexpensive acrylic nails, technicians might be using the less expensive MMA. Although we did find some cheap prices at salons that tested just fine.
- MMA also has an overwhelming smell that can make your eyes water and give you a headache.
- Also, MMA is a strong adhesive so beware if your acrylic nails are extremely hard to take off.

The cosmetology board didn't test for MMA because of the expense and they didn't think it was a problem. That has all changed since seeing our test results.

The executive director says this issue will now be at the top of the agenda at the next board meeting.

"I think we need to propose some more legislation and have it more specific in our laws and rules," says Betty Moore. "And notify all of our people that this will not be tolerated in the state of Oklahoma."

Not every woman is allergic to MMA or will experience side effects. But here is more information on this toxin and what you need to know if you or someone you know uses acrylic nails.

#### **Methyl Methacrylate (MMA) Test**

Salons tested and determined to have used the liquid adhesive approved for use in Oklahoma:

##### **Nails, Etc**

6130 E. 71st

##### **Super Nails**

11234 E. 71st

##### **Allure Hair & Nail Salon (Hair & Nails by Kim Bryson)**

5525 S. Lewis

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