

PEDICURE CO

Indulging in a manicure or pedicure at the salon can be bliss, yet there are certain precautions that everyone, particularly those with diabetes, should keep in mind.

“There’s always the risk that you can pick up an infection at a salon,” says Georgeanne Botek, DPM, FACFAS, medical director of the diabetic foot program at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

The risk of infection increases if your diabetes is not well-controlled or if you have foot or hand complications such as peripheral nerve damage, poor circulation, open sores, or existing infections of the skin or nail.

If you have any of these symptoms, visit a podiatrist or dermatologist for nail care. If not, follow these tips from the experts for the best possible manicure or pedicure experience.

Pedi Pointers

“Fungal infections and ingrown toenails are the most common problems that can occur when you go for a pedicure,” says Botek.

To avoid ingrown toenails, nails should not be cut too short and there should be no sharp edges on the sides, she says. For people with diabetes, she recommends using a nail nipper, which is more contoured than a typical clipper.

“I recommend to all patients that they bring their own nail kit [to the salon],” says Richard K. Scher, MD, a dermatologist at Columbia University in New York. That way, they can ensure that their instruments are sterile and reduce the likelihood of infections.

A technician shouldn’t use any sharp tools to remove dead skin on your feet. Pumice stones are okay for feet, but be gentle. “Over-vigorous use of a pumice

stone could break the skin and set someone up for an infection,” says Scher.

Marianne O’Donoghue, MD, a dermatologist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, says, “Never shave your legs the day you get a pedicure.” That’s because they’ll be more vulnerable to infections, she adds.

Also, be kind to yourself and other salon customers. Don’t go to the salon if you have warts or thick, crumbly nails from a nail infection. You could be contagious. See your doctor instead.

Hand Hints

Some people with diabetes are more susceptible to yeast fungus, which can cause infection around the nail and cuticle, says Scher. No one with a nail infection should go to the salon.



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BY
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HERE'S WHAT
YOU NEED TO
KNOW BEFORE YOU
GO TO THE SALON
FOR THAT NEXT
PEDICURE OR
MANICURE.

“There is no reason why [a person with diabetes] can’t get artificial nails put on as long as they don’t have an infection,” says Scher. But he adds that it’s critical that the person not be allergic to the acrylic used in most nail glues. This will cause inflammation of the skin that could lead to an infection.

Tell the technician that you have diabetes so that he or she is extra careful in removing and applying artificial nails to avoid excess trauma.

Clean, Tidy Salon

“You should go to a salon that is clean, uses sterile instruments, and has technicians who are not over-aggressive when it comes to manipulating cuticles and cleaning under the nails,” says Scher.

Botek says, “You want to see that the basins and tubs [used for soaks] are washed and disinfected between customers.”

Ask to see the salon owner’s license and those of their technicians, too. Make your appointment early in the day, says Botek, to ensure the cleanest possible experience. And, if you notice any problems with your feet or hands afterwards, see your doctor immediately. ▲

Kate Ruder is an associate editor of Diabetes Forecast.