

# Do UV Nail Lamps Cause Skin Cancer?

by admin on Tuesday, May 18th, 2010 | 2 Comments

Recently UV nail lamps have come into question by sensationalized TV programs.

While the question is a valid one, the fact remains some of the answers are presented without much research into the facts.

Let's get this out of the way right now. Nearly everything can be linked to cancer in one way or another.

For example I could say with true authority that vegetables have been linked to cancer. I can pull a poll of cancer victims and ask them if, in the 6 months before they were diagnosed with cancer, had they eaten any vegetables. Nearly universally the answer would be yes. Obviously that would be a coincidence.

Sometimes that is the way media works. They will take some kind of obscure fact, manipulate the data and come up the conclusion they think will cause the most people to tune in.

Most of the questions about UV nail lamps and cancer were brought on by an observation printed by the American Medical Association stating that two people who had skin cancer had also been exposed to a UV nail lamp. There were several inaccuracies in the article that any nail technician would have been able to clear up. The media decided to run with the story without talking to industry experts. Everyone knows that overexposure to the Sun's UV rays has been linked to skin cancer. I also believe that everyone knows that a UV lamp generates UV rays. It's naïve to think that there is no possibility of skin cancer from a UV lamp.

However let's look at the realities of a UV lamp designed for nails. The output of a UV nail lamp is so small it is nearly comparable to sunlight.

Assuming you are in the UV lamp for 10 minutes total, this is about the equivalent of driving in your car in the sun with your hands on the steering wheel for about 15 minutes. Now let's compare a UV nail lamp to a tanning bed.

The most common UV nail lamps have four 9 watt bulbs for a total energy usage of 36 watts. A conservative commercial tanning bed can have 28 bulbs at 100 watts each or a total of 2800 watts. A tanning bed is many times more intense than the sun, that is why you don't need to sit in a tanning bed for an hour to get a tan. I have never heard of anyone getting a tan or sunburn from normal UV nail lamp exposure.

So **can** a UV lamp designed for nails cause skin cancer? Yes it probably can, if you sleep with it every night turned on strapped to your hand. Or walk around all day with it turned on strapped your feet like shoes. But if you did that people would think you were pretty weird.

But the more important question is **will** it cause skin cancer? Probably not. If you want to minimize your risk for skin cancer it would be much more important to wear a hat and sunscreen, do not sun bathe, and generally limit your exposure to the sun especially near water, snow or on cloudy days.

These tips are infinitely more important than skipping your 10 minutes of exposure in a nail UV lamp every two to four weeks. If you are still concerned, the answer is simple. Just apply a sunblock to your hands containing zinc oxide 1 hour before your nail appointment.

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## 2 Responses to “Do UV Nail Lamps Cause Skin Cancer?”

1.



anon says:

October 17, 2010 at 8:23 am

Thanks for the post, but I really don't see how your vegetable analogy works here, to be honest?

*Of course you can link cancer to anything, if you so desire, but there is already a very well known, very well proven, direct causal link between UV exposure in general (and UV lamps in particular) and skin cancer; whereas, there is no direct causal link between vegetables and cancer, at all. Also, these cases of cancer have specifically affected the hands of these women and ONLY their hands. To be anything like a direct analogy, you would have needed to say that the media would be manipulating the data (if they said that vegetables gave you cancer) after someone had stuck a carrot up their nose, twice a month, for at least a year and then had developed cancer of the nose! Even then, it still wouldn't have been a direct comparison – as, as far as I know, there is no direct link between sticking a carrot up one's nose and nose cancer?! So, we have two extremely good reasons to think that there is a very high chance that these women were the victims of UV rays from nail salon lamps; 1) that their cancers were ONLY on their hands (so, it is unlikely to have been caused by general exposure to the sun) and 2) that there is already an established and direct causal link between UV (and UV lamps) and skin cancer. Re. sunblock – it's a nice idea but I, also, really, can't see how applying sunblock to one's hands, one hour before having a gel manicure, would work to be honest? Surely, the fact that the old gels often have to be soaked off in acetone and then all the handling involved in filing, pushing back cuticles and applying new gels, would mean that the sunblock would be completely removed in some areas and very largely rubbed off in others, by the time the client's hand was put under the lamp? Personally, as things stand, I prefer to avoid UV lamps altogether and am anxiously awaiting a safer alternative to gel nails before doing anything much more risky than applying regular nail polish to my toenails, occasionally!*

2.  admin says:

*March 3, 2011 at 1:37 pm*

*Here is exactly how the vegetable analogy works:*

*Research links cancer to fruit and vegetables:*

*<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/feb/17/medicalscience.research>*

*VEGETABLES CAUSE CANCER?; Dr. Walker Declares Worm Is Source of Parasite That Produces Disease:*

*<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20611FE3A5A17738DDDA00994D9415B888CF1D3>*

*Everything Causes Cancer:*

*<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread477720/pg1>*

*I could go on for pages.*

*You claim there is a direct link between UV exposure and cancer. Yes there is, just as I said in the article. However the article is talking about UV lamps designed to cure UV nail products. Those lamps are not in the same family as tanning lamps and cannot be compared except superficially. There has never been a study done with nail UV lamps and cancer. The "observation" that I made reference to in the article is nothing more than that. An observation. One doctor observed skin cancer on the hands in two patients who had been exposed to a UV nail lamp. No lifestyle study was done, no testing was done, the doctor didn't measure the UV output of the lamp or even examine the lamp at all. The patients could have been placed under a drying station and thought it was a UV lamp. In any case There are tens or perhaps hundreds of millions of people per year that are exposed to UV nail lamps who do not have skin cancer on their hands.*

*You claim there is no direct correlation between vegetables and cancer, however you are incorrect. There is in fact several studies done that link vegetables directly to cancer.*

*It is also a fact that there are no studies that link UV nail lamps to cancer whatsoever. None, zero, zilch, nada, not one.*

*You mention that the cancers were only on their hands to it must be the nail UV lamp. I would agree with you, if there weren't tens of thousands of people with skin cancer only on their hands that have never been exposed to a nail UV lamp.*

*Their has been a study done on the output of UV nail lamps. The results of that study conclude that the UVB exposure during a nail service is the same as 26 seconds of sun exposure. UVA exposure is the same as 2.7 minutes in sunlight.*

*Sure we all know that UV exposure is linked to skin cancer. As I mentioned in the article, we all need to look out for our total UV exposure from all sources. If you tan, work outside, drive a lot or have other sources of more than average exposure to your hands and you never use sunscreen, you should think twice about getting a UV cured nail service. For for the vast, extreme majority of the population there is very little risk.*

*Regarding sunblock, if you don't think that sunblock blocks UV rays, then there really isn't anything I can say. They call it sunblock because it blocks UV from your skin. If you don't believe it then there is a conspiracy going on that is bigger than you or I.*

*I am not trying to convert you to go out today and get your nails done. If you don't want to, it is a personal choice. However facts are facts and beliefs are beliefs. If you believe that the UV lamp is going to harm you, stay away, however the facts show that your risks are very low. You have a better chance of getting cancer from vegetables then you have from a nail UV lamp. Of course there is risk in anything, you have risk of breaking an ankle when you get out of bed. Everyone has the risk of getting hit by earthbound space debris, but we don't all live in fall out shelters because of the risk.*