



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BIOERN ARTHURS

Manicures and pedicures are becoming more and more popular in the GTA. There are approximately 2,800 salons in Toronto alone and over 9,000 beauty and personal care salons in Ontario.<sup>1</sup>

The products used by nail salon workers contain a variety of chemicals, some of which can cause serious health problems, especially when used regularly.

Some of these chemicals can contribute to cancers, skin reactions, and asthma. They can also have an effect on women's reproductive health, which is a concern since the majority of aestheticians in Canada are women (88%).<sup>2</sup> Chemicals can build up in our bodies, sometimes causing problems only many years later.

## WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1996, the National Network on Environments and Women's Health (NNEWH) is committed to improving the health of Canadian women through research, policy and action. Since 2011, a strong focus of NNEWH's work has been women's exposures to toxic chemicals in the workplace and the federal government's role in regulating those chemicals.

### Contact Us

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative:**

[www.cahealthynailsalons.org](http://www.cahealthynailsalons.org)

### **Ontario Lung Association:**

[www.on.lung.ca/document.doc?id=1219](http://www.on.lung.ca/document.doc?id=1219)

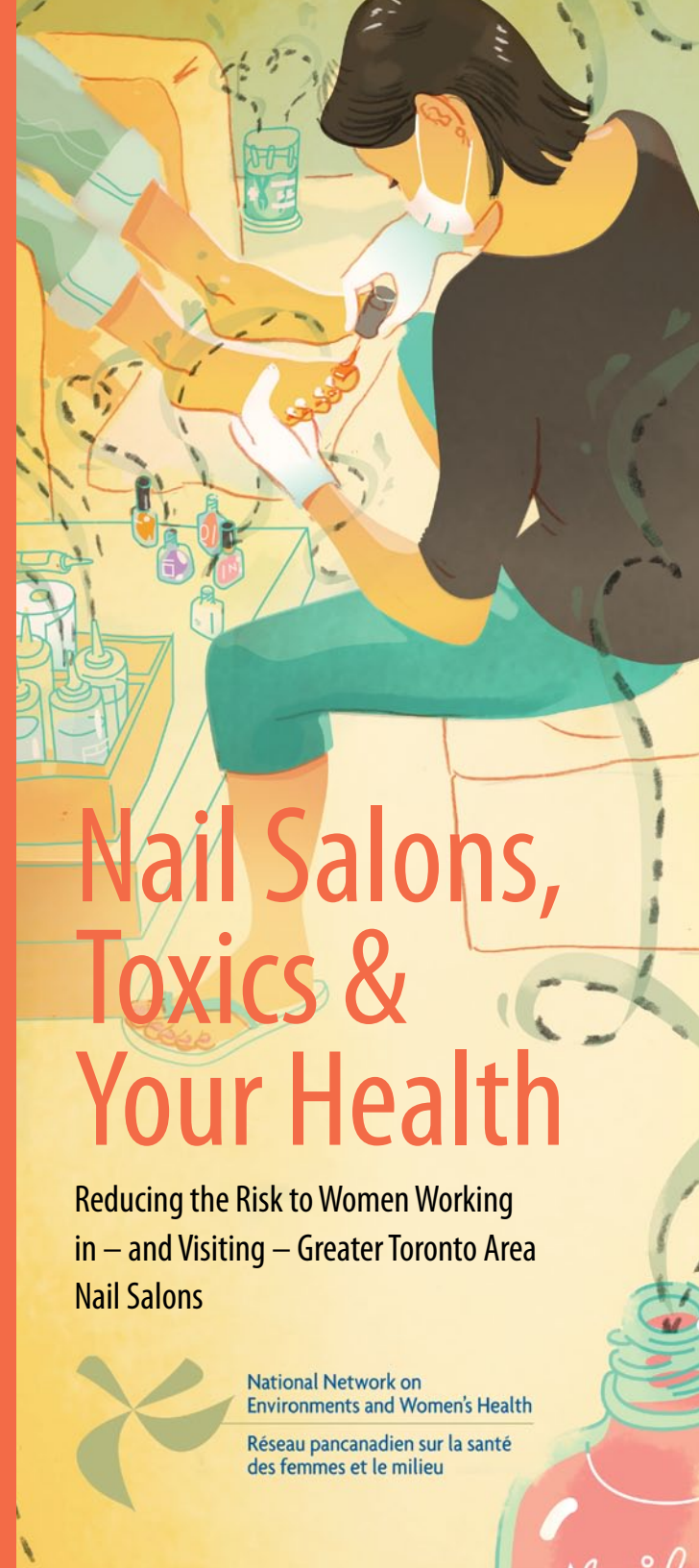
### **Women's Voices for the Earth:**

[www.womensvoices.org](http://www.womensvoices.org)

With thanks to Tides Canada and to the CIHR Team in Gender, Environment and Health at UQAM for financial assistance with this project.

- 1 Statistics Canada. 2014. *Table 551-0005: Canadian business patterns, location counts, employment size and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), national industries, by Canada and provinces, December 2013.*
- 2 Government of Canada. 2013. "Job Market Report: Estheticians, Electrologists and Related Occupations." *Job Bank*. December 23.
- 3 California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative. (2013). *Understanding the Toxic Trio*. Retrieved from California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative: <http://www.cahealthynailsalons.org>

April 10, 2014



# Nail Salons, Toxics & Your Health

Reducing the Risk to Women Working  
in – and Visiting – Greater Toronto Area  
Nail Salons






National Network on  
Environments and Women's Health

Réseau pancanadien sur la santé  
des femmes et le milieu

## THE “TOXIC TRIO”

The “**toxic trio**” – phthalates, toluene and formaldehyde<sup>3</sup> – are the three most harmful chemicals found in common nail salon products.

We should all be working to try to get these chemicals out of nail salon products, and out of workplaces (so we can get them out of our bodies).

PRODUCTS	CHEMICAL & HEALTH EFFECTS
 Nail polish, sealant, top coat and base coat	<b>PHthalATES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Itchy eyes, nose and throat</li><li>▶ Linked to negative brain effects (difficult to remember or concentrate)</li></ul>
 Finger nail glue, nail polish and polish thinner	<b>TOluENE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Can cause light-headedness and nausea</li><li>▶ Linked to miscarriages</li><li>▶ Linked to birth defects / abnormalities</li></ul>
 Disinfectants, nail polish	<b>FORMALDEHYDE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Can cause watery and burning eyes</li><li>▶ Linked to breathing problems (asthma, coughing)</li><li>▶ Carcinogen: causes cancer</li></ul>

**VOICE YOUR CONCERNS!**

## Tell our governments to help make salons safer and to take toxic chemicals off the market. How?

Talk to your city councillor, your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and your Member of Parliament (MP). To find them and for what to tell them, see <http://nnewh.org/overview.php?section=4>

Show your elected government representative this brochure and direct them to links on the back for more information.

## MAKING NAIL SALONS HEALTHIER

### If you are a salon customer

Start the conversation on creating safer salons:

- ▶ Demand nail products that are free of the “toxic trio” chemicals
- ▶ Ask your local salon how they are creating a safe work environment for their staff

### If you are a nail salon owner

Make your salon safer to protect your customers, your workers and your business:

- ▶ Buy products free of the “toxic trio” chemicals
- ▶ Open windows and doors to let in fresh air
- ▶ Store chemicals in well-ventilated areas
- ▶ Put lids on trash cans to contain waste products
- ▶ Install and encourage workers to use local ventilation system at work stations, especially where acrylic nails are applied, to draw contaminated air away from them

### If you are a nail salon worker

In addition to asking your salon owner to take the steps above, you can also:

- ▶ Take outdoor breaks and eat or drink away from your work station
- ▶ Wear protective gear like long-sleeved shirts, nitrile gloves (instead of latex or vinyl) and N95 mask (instead of surgical masks) for dust and particulate matter