

The Health Series: #3 Pedicures and Foot Health

December 17, 2016

I'm pleased to introduce this month's guest, Valerie Rich who started her aesthetician career in 2004. Valerie is currently living in Nanaimo, BC.

Welcome, Valerie!

Pedicures and Foot Health

I'm often surprised how many of my clients that come in for a pedicure say to me, "I hate my feet" or "My feet are so ugly." Obviously, they haven't seen as many feet as I have. As an aesthetician, I notice feet and hands and all too often I see more women care for their fingernails, or spend more money on acrylic/gel nails, than they do their feet. It's very easy to neglect our feet and most of us don't give our feet much thought, that is, until they hurt. Take into account that most of your waking hours are spent on your feet, and the average person walks between six and eight thousand steps per day. Is that not enough reason to pamper those feet with a soothing pedicure? Not only do regular pedicures (every six to eight weeks) feel good, they're also important for your health in many ways.

So what are the benefits of regular pedicures? Soaking and exfoliating of skin removes dead skin cells and allows the skin to breathe. Peppermint masks and a foot massage promotes good blood circulation and moisturizes the feet. A paraffin treatment is especially nice for excessively dry feet during the winter months. Also, your aesthetician will be able to spot minor issues or problems that may occur such as fungal infections.

Salons are popping up so quickly and the dilemma is 'how do I choose a good salon?' Ensure you are booking into an accredited salon or your aesthetician has their credentials on display.

Some things to avoid are:

- **Jet Baths** I'm sure your feet will feel wonderful in them but these jet baths are very time consuming to fully disinfect and sterilize properly between clients therefore harbouring a warm, moist breeding ground for bacteria.
- **Razors** Most places ban these now but they were commonplace for the removal of calluses. Using a razor, especially on thick calluses, did the job much faster and quicker but also leaves you vulnerable to cuts and infections. Also, if too much of the callus is removed it might be difficult to stand or walk on your feet.
- **Shaving** I know you'll feel like an ape not shaving before you head out to a pedicure, but doing so is more beneficial to you. If you nick yourself while shaving and then place your feet, say in one of these dreaded jet baths, you are leaving yourself open to a bacterial infection.
- **Dirty Environment** If you walk into the salon and it is not clean and appealing, walk out.

What's keeping you from booking a pedicure? If you're concerned about the implements and whether they're sterilized correctly, purchase your own to take with you whenever you have a pedicure. You want to purchase a good quality set such as stainless steel or surgical steel. At least you'll have peace of mind knowing that these have only been used on one person: you.

There's nothing wrong with skipping out on the polish. In fact, it's better for your nails to give them a breather during the winter months (except when heading south for a vacation). My clients that skip the polish during the winter months always get a longer foot massage!

Valerie Rich, Aesthetician, December 2016