



## KNOW THE DANGERS!

**MMA** (methyl-methacrylate) is a liquid sometimes illegally used in acrylic nail applications. In spite of warnings against its use in the nail industry, unscrupulous nail technicians and salons continue to subject an unsuspecting public to this hazardous chemical. To understand the problems associated with **MMA**, a little background is needed. Acrylic is created by combining a liquid monomer with a powder polymer. A chemical reaction between these two ingredients causes the acrylic to harden in about three minutes. While still soft, acrylic can be applied to nails and shaped to form enhancements. In the 1970's, early nail technicians purchased acrylic from dentists and medical supply stores. Over time, it became clear that when used on nails **MMA** caused serious health risks. In its liquid form, the small size of the **MMA** molecule enables it to penetrate the skin, sometimes causing severe allergic reactions. Additionally, **MMA** has a very strong and distinctive odor. Breathing these vapors can cause asthmatic symptoms.

Even after the acrylic has hardened, **MMA** still poses a threat to the health of the nail. **MMA** acrylic bonds very tightly to the natural nail, so tightly in fact that when the nail is subjected to stress, rather than breaking from the natural nail, the acrylic can actually pull part or all of the nail off the nail bed. When the hazards of **MMA** use on nails became clear, responsible manufacturers developed a safe alternative, ethyl-methacrylate or EMA. EMA is hundreds of times less likely to cause allergic reactions, and because EMA acrylics are somewhat softer than **MMA** acrylics, they break more easily under stress, saving the natural nail. The question is, if this safer EMA is available, and many states have passed laws forbidding **MMA** use on nails, why do some nail technicians still use **MMA**? The answer is simple economics. **MMA** monomer costs about 90% less than EMA monomer. **MMA** is still widely available from unethical distributors, at a fraction of the cost of EMA, and until something changes, **MMA** will continue to be used in this industry. How can you know if a salon is using **MMA**? It is impossible to be sure without performing chemical tests on the monomer itself.

**However, there are several things you can look for which might indicate that a salon is using MMA.**

- \* **MMA has an overpoweringly strong odour.**
- \* **Nail technicians wear masks to protect themselves from the dangerous vapors.**
- \* **Nail technicians using MMA will nearly always use a nail drill because MMA acrylic is too hard to file with a hand file.**
- \* **Removing MMA acrylics is very difficult, requiring from 40-60 minutes of soaking in pure acetone to dissolve the nails.**
- \* **Because of the low cost of MMA monomer, salons using it can charge much less for their services. Be cautious of any salon charging less than \$50 for a full set, or less than \$30 for a fill.**

The only way to stop the use of **MMA** in the nail industry is for consumers to make its use uneconomical for salons. Here are some ways in which you could help make that happen.

From this day forward, refuse to patronize any salon you suspect uses **MMA**.

Tell your friends and family about the dangers of **MMA**, and encourage them to avoid salons that use it.

**This Salon is proud to say that ALL our products are MMA free!**

