

Board of Cosmetology

Department

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Profession Overview
- How to Get Licensed
- Board Meetings
- Position Statements
- Consumer Help
- License Inquiry
- Laws & Rules
- Regulatory Compliance
- Forms
- Fees
- License Update
- Financial Aid Available
- Related Links
- Opportunities

Safe Salons Public Education Campaign

[Protection from Infection](#)

[OHLA Health & Safety Brochures](#)

[Campaign Resources](#)

[Northwest Stylist Columns](#)

[Keeping Harmful Bugs at Bay](#)

[Have a Question? Just Ask Us!](#)

[Infections, Outbreaks Overview](#)

[Pedicures Shouldn't Be Painful](#)

[Problem? OHLA Can Help](#)

Protection from Infection

Oregon, give yourself a hand! Our state has avoided the kind of bacterial skin infection outbreaks that have plagued other states in the past several years. And we want to keep it that way.

In other states, [bacterial skin infection outbreaks](#) — due to improper cleaning and disinfection of foot spas — harmed hundreds of nail salon clients, notably in northern California. The [Oregon Health Licensing Agency \(OHLA\)](#), however, has received only four complaints related to similar bacterial infections since 2003.

Though none resulted in an infection outbreak, OHLA and the [Board of Cosmetology](#) ask practitioners and the public to be alert against such infections. Even one individual infection is too many.

Focusing on Oregon's nearly 5,000 licensed salons and 7,000 independent contractors, OHLA has launched its latest public education campaign, **Safe Salons**, to promote health, safety and infection control. The campaign also gives tips to consumers on making their visit to a salon or spa a safe and healthy one.



[▲ Back to the top](#)

Campaign Resources

Practitioners and consumers alike can benefit from checking out OHLA's public education resources concerning salon health, safety and infection control.

Safe Salons campaign resources feature the following:

- Two individual Web pages in the Board of Cosmetology section of the OHLA Web site, with links to other non-OHLA sites
- OHLA salon health, safety and infection control brochures (*Brochures appear in PDF format, which requires Adobe Reader. Click [here](#) to download the latest version if you are unable to download the brochures.*)
- A series of health, safety and infection control columns originally published in [Northwest Stylist &](#)

[Salon](#), a trade publication for the cosmetology industry distributed to Oregon's nearly 5,000 licensed salons, 7,000 independent contractors

 [Back to the top](#)

Keeping Harmful Bugs at Bay

News reports of emerging pathogens such as *methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and other infectious agents should be cause for concern, but not alarm, if state-**REQUIRED** steps are taken by all practitioners.

Consumers can also play a key role in keeping bugs at bay -- by being informed.

While the bad news is that harmful microbes seem to be on the rise, the good news is that salons can protect their clients with **REQUIRED** preventive measures.

MRSA is thought to be passed by skin-to-skin contact and is often spread from the hands to the nose or other open membranes, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

State requirements such as proper hand washing and proper disposal or disinfection of equipment and materials have been established to prevent transmission of all types of harmful pathogens.

Oregon regulations specifically address how to prevent the transmission of other infectious agents, such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B, C and D.

Other health, safety and infection control topics the **Safe Salons** campaign covers include:

- **Fungal & Viral Infections:** Fungal and viral infections are potentially transmissible, but also preventable. See ["Keeping Harmful Bugs at Bay"](#) in *Northwest Stylist & Salon*.
- **Health Condition:** Nail salon clients with pre-existing health conditions should use extra caution. Consulting with a physician before receiving services is recommended. See also [Client Records: Required](#) (PDF).
- **Indoor Air Quality:** Odors should not be overpowering or make your eyes water. See the *Northwest Stylist* article, ["How's the Air in There?"](#)



Here are some tips to make your pedicure a safe and healthy experience:

- Avoid shaving your legs during the 24 hours before receiving a pedicure. Shaving, waxing or other similar activity can create small nicks or cuts that increase the risk of infection.
- Avoid receiving a pedicure if you have any open cuts or sores on skin where services will be performed.
- If you have a medical condition that might complicate your manicure or pedicure service, consult your physician beforehand.
- Examine the foot spa before receiving a pedicure. Has it been properly cleaned and disinfected? Ask if you're not sure. For details, see [Foot Spa Safety](#) (PDF).
- Pay special attention to the screens in circulating foot spas. Screens **MUST** be cleaned and disinfected after each client.



For more information on nail salon health, safety and infection control, see [Nail Salons: Consumer Information](#) (PDF).

For details on the steps salons **MUST** take to clean and disinfect foot spas, see [Foot Spa Safety](#) (PDF).

 [Back to the top](#)

Infections, Outbreaks Overview

[Click here](#) to learn about the different types of infections, specific outbreaks, how infections are transmitted, symptoms of particular infections, risk factors, and preventive measures.

[▲ Back to the top](#)

Pedicures Shouldn't Be Painful

Manicures and pedicures should be enjoyable, not painful or unpleasant. Your cuticles **SHOULD NOT** be bloody or swollen during or after a salon visit.



The use of drills on the cuticles is legal in Oregon, but cutting the skin is **PROHIBITED**.

Razor blade instruments are legal for use in Oregon to remove corns and calluses on your heel or other parts of your foot.

As with any instrument, razor blades and drill bits **MUST** be discarded or cleaned and disinfected after each procedure.

[▲ Back to the top](#)

Problem? OHLA Can Help

Educating consumers and practitioners is a top priority at OHLA. If you suffer any harm, you can turn to OHLA for help and you may file a complaint.

OHLA responds to each consumer complaint, conducts investigations, and takes disciplinary action against licensees who violate state standards. For more information on the complaint process, [click here](#).

Prevention is also a key goal at OHLA. That's why our enforcement officers conduct regular inspections of salons statewide.

While looking for violations of state-required health, safety and infection control standards, OHLA enforcement officers also take the time to review these standards with salon owners and practitioners.

For more information on the inspection process, see [Facility Inspections](#) (PDF).



[▲ Back to the top](#)

OHLA Health & Safety Brochures

Practitioners and the public may download these brochures or request copies from OHLA by calling 503-373-1939 or via [e-mail](#).

Brochures are in PDF format, which requires Adobe Reader. Click [here](#) to download the latest version if you are unable to download.

[Nail Salons: Consumer Information](#)

[Foot Spa Safety](#)

[Nail Technician Tool Safety](#)

[Stay Away from MMA](#)

[Client Records: Required](#)

[▲ Back to the top](#)

Northwest Stylist Columns

These columns originally appeared in the cosmetology trade publication, *Northwest Stylist & Salon*:

[How's the Air in There? \(indoor air quality - April 2007\)](#)

[Oregon Avoids Outbreaks. Deserves Applause \(March 2007\)](#)

[Keeping Harmful Bugs at Bay \(February 2007\)](#)

[Disinfection or Disposal? \(November 2006\)](#)

[Safety Is in Your Hands \(October 2006\)](#)



 [Back to the top](#)

Have a Question? Just Ask Us!

Our goal is to educate and inform consumers and practitioners. If none of our resource materials answer your specific question(s), just ask us!

You can [e-mail your question](#) or call 503-373-1939. We will respond to your inquiry within two business days as part of OHLA's [Customer Service Standards](#).

 [Back to the top](#)

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[Text Only](#) | [State Directories](#) | [Agencies A to Z](#) | [Site Map](#) | [About Oregon.gov](#) | [Oregon.gov](#)

[File Formats](#) | [Oregon Administrative Rules](#) | [Oregon Revised Statutes](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Web Site Feedback](#)



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