



# **Preventing Pedicure Foot Spa Infections**

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# Preventing Pedicure Foot Spa Infections

## Guidance from the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Outbreaks of skin infections on the legs and feet of patrons following spa pedicures have caused concern about spa safety. This page provides information for customers of salon pedicure foot spas which can help reduce the potential for infections associated with pedicure foot spa use.



### Protect Your Skin!

- Microorganisms in foot spas can enter through the skin; so broken skin (e.g., cuts and abrasions) should not come into contact with foot spa water.
- Do not shave, use hair removal creams, or wax your legs during the 24 hours before receiving treatment in a foot spa.
- Do not use a foot spa if your skin has any open wounds such as bug bites, bruises, scratches, cuts, scabs, poison ivy, etc.

### Identifying an Infection

Open wounds appear on the skin of feet and legs. Initially they may look like insect bites, but they increase in size and severity over time, and sometimes result in pus and scarring.

### Cause of Infections

Some incidents of foot spa infections have been caused by *Mycobacterium fortuitum*. This organism can occur naturally in water and soil. Other organisms have also been found in footbath systems. The screens and tubes of foot spas are particularly good places for the bacteria to collect and grow, often forming dense layers of cells and proteins called biofilms, which can be very hard to remove.

### Know how the salon cleans and disinfects foot spas.

- Ask salon workers how the foot spas are maintained and how often.
- A foot spa should be disinfected between each customer, and nightly. The disinfectant needs to work for the full time listed on its label, typically 10 minutes, depending on the type of disinfectant.
- Proper cleaning and disinfection can greatly reduce the risk of getting an infection by reducing the bacteria that can build up in the foot spa system.

**Disinfectants used in the foot spa should indicate on the label that they're approved for hospital use.**

A disinfectant label should clearly show its uses and that it is EPA-approved.

- Salons should use an EPA-registered hospital disinfectant
- The label (at right) should list relevant product information, including:
  1. The terms “Disinfectant” and also “Hospital” or “Medical” or “Health Care”. This indicates the product can be used as a disinfectant on surfaces in these environments.
  2. The EPA registration number.
  3. Some products may have instructions for both sanitizing and disinfecting footbaths. **Pedicurists should follow disinfecting directions.**

EZ DISINFECTANT	
Disinfectant - Bactericide - Virucide - Fungicide For Hospital, Institutional and Home Use	
Active Ingredients:	
Component A	15.0%
Component B	2.5%
Component C	2.5%
Inert Ingredients	80.0%
TOTAL	100.0%
This product has been proven effective against the following organisms:	
Staphylococcus aureus	
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	
Serratia cheimomata	
Trichophyton mentagrophytes	
HP-1	
E.P.A. Reg. No. XXXX-XX	
Hospitals, Nursing Home Facilities, other health care establishments, schools, veterinary clinics, office buildings, retail establishments, industrial facilities	

**Do not use the foot spa if you are not sure it is disinfected and safe to use.** Do not risk your health. You should report any problems to your state cosmetological board.

**This fact sheet and related information about:**

- foot spa health concerns
- the disinfectant label
- usage and maintenance
- federal and state regulations

available online at <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/preventing-pedicure-foot-spa-infections>