



## What causes a nail product allergy?

Allergic reactions to the various components of artificial nail products are usually due to interaction between reactive compounds in the products and proteins in the body. Over time the body may lose its ability to recognise the modified protein as its own and a powerful immune response is initiated where the body attacks the modified protein thinking it to be of foreign origin. Unlike other types of reactions that may simply release histamine from mast cells these immune system mediated reactions can become increasingly more severe with each exposure to the offending agent. Unfortunately there is no cure – once an allergy has begun it will continue.

## What components can cause these allergies?

Allergies have been seen to almost every component in artificial nail products. However HEMA ( 2 hydroxy ethylmethacrylate) is a very common offending agent. The rate of allergy to this ingredient has increased significantly in recent years as HEMA has become a very common ingredient in many gel polishes. Nail technicians can be constantly exposed to HEMA during the cleansing stage of the topcoat and allergies are also possible in clients. The use of isopropanol to cleanse the gel polish topcoats can also produce de fattening of the skin making contact between the uncured HEMA and the skins proteins more likely. Other components may also produce allergic reactions and it cannot always immediately be presumed that HEMA is the offending agent , that said it does appear to be the most common offending agent. Once a HEMA allergy has begun continued exposure to other acrylates may produce “cross reactivity” and make the user allergic to multiple ingredients.

## How can I prevent allergies from happening?

Allergies are the direct result of repeated exposure between nail products and the skin. Minimising the contact between products and living tissue will help prevent allergy from developing. HEMA allergy has increased markedly with the use of gel polishes and care needs to be taken when performing the cleansing step at the end of the service. HEMA free and full cure gel polishes are now starting to come to the market which may reduce exposure. Shifting to the use of HEMA free products may be useful, but even these products may contain other potential allergens so correct use of the products to minimise skin contact is always the best practice.

## So what products have HEMA in them?

HEMA has been a very useful monomer in many nail formulations although over exposure in gel polishes is creating an ever increasing number of users that are allergic to it. HEMA is commonly used in gel polishes, non acid primers and some acrylic monomer systems.

## Does Beautyworld offer any HEMA free products?

Yes

The following products are HEMA free:

- Light Elegance P+ Gel polishes
- Light Elegance Gels, Topcoats and Bonders
- JOSS Gel Polishes
- Perfect Nails Competition Formula Acrylic Monomer
- Nail Advantage Monomer
- Perfect Nails Platinum Plus

## Tell me more about Perfect Nails Competition Formula Acrylic System

This is our new acrylic system and offers the most recent advances in polymer technology. This system has a faster and more uniform wet out producing more control of the bead and less filling after application. For techs that are able to work very quickly the Competition Formula monomer can be used with the Perfect Nails Speed polymer.

## Tell me more about Perfect Nails Platinum Plus Acrylic System

This system is a our premium HEMA free acrylic product. The monomer is HEMA free as is the Platinum Plus Double C Bonder – a unique acid free and HEMA free bonding agent. This system uses the most recent advances in polymer technology to deliver faster wet out, more control during application and less filing. If you are able to work quickly the Perfect Nails Speed polymers can be used with the Platinum Plus monomer and this can be useful during the cooler months of the year.



## **Tell me more about Light Elegance Gels**

Light Elegance hard gels and gel polishes are all formulated to be HEMA free and very low allergy. They are safe to use on pregnant women and clients undergoing intensive drug therapy including chemotherapy.

## **Tell me more about Nail Advantage Acrylic System**

This monomer is HEMA free and more temperature tolerant than the Perfect Nails Standard system. The polymer is a medium fast set and is useful in cool climates. During the summer months it may be too fast for some users especially if the salon temperature is not well regulated. The Nail Advantage Non Acid primer does contain HEMA. Use the Platinum Plus Double C Bonder if you have an established HEMA allergy and require a non acid primer for this product.

## **About the writer**

Ray Daley holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree and has been involved with the distribution of beauty products since 1997. He is currently the Director of Beautyworld Pty Ltd , an Australian owned family company.

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