

# CHEMOTHERAPY NAIL CARE

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During chemotherapy, your fingernails and toenails may change. Most nail changes are temporary. Your nails will likely return to normal a few weeks after chemotherapy treatment is finished.

## **What are some of the changes that may happen to my nails?**

- Breaking, splitting, or peeling
- Lines or ridges forming along the nail
- Separation from the nail beds
- Nail loss
- Discoloration
- Redness, pain, or drainage around the nails

While most of these changes are temporary, the ridges and lines may remain on your nails for some time after completing chemotherapy.

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## How can I care for my nails?

There are a number of things you can do to reduce nail damage during chemotherapy:

- If you wear nail polish, water-based polish is best. Plan to use a mild (non-acetone based) polish remover.
- Don't use artificial or glue-on nails during and for a few months after treatment.
- Use clean tools to gently cut, clean, and file nails. Push cuticles back rather than cutting them. Avoid getting manicures at the salon during this time unless you take your own clean and disinfected tools with you.
- Regularly use a nail strengthener. A nail strengthener is a special type of nail polish which can strengthen the nails. It can be purchased from your local supermarket or pharmacy. (Examples: OPI, Nail Tek, Jasön)
- Keep your nails clipped short.
- Apply moisturizing cream to your nails and cuticles regularly.
- Keep your hands and nails clean to avoid infection.
- Wear protective gloves while gardening or doing household chores, particularly when washing dishes.
- If your nails are split, use a topical antiseptic cream to reduce the risk of infection. (Example: Savlon Antiseptic Cream)
- Avoid damaging the skin around the nails. Do not bite or pick at hang nails.

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