



HAWAII'S NEWS CHANNEL

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Nail salons booming business, but health a major concern
Ron Mizutani

They're popping up on every street, in every community in town and, no, we're not talking about Starbucks.

Nail salons are part of a booming industry that's grabbing the attention of more than just customers.

There was a time when a pedicure cost you an arm and a leg.

But a rapid increase in competition has forced businesses to shave prices.

"I say maybe in the last five years it's really a lot," says Jennifer Kreytak, licensed cosmetologist.

Jennifer Kreytak has groomed nails for more than a decade and doesn't like what's happening to her industry.

"A lot of people just ask questions. How do we sanitize our implements? Do we clean our footpads and pedicure stuff?" says Kreytak. "Lately I've been hearing, 'ask me if I empty out my water.' I'm saying, 'excuse me, yes.'"

"Everybody is popping up and they're lowering the prices. They're more of quantity than quality," says Kathy Parker, licensed cosmetologist. "They get it cheaper, but they do it faster."

Cheaper, faster, but not always cleaner.

"I have heard of people, yes, getting fungus and different things because they're not sanitized," says Billie Hunter, pedicure customer.

"I've had infections in my fingers in the past and it's not pleasant," says Ginny Hioki, manicure customer.

"It's very important because it's not only our customer's health that we're worried about, it's our health as well," says Parker.

Salon businesses have exploded. In 2004, there were 5,600 licensed beauty operators in Hawaii. In 2006, that number has risen to nearly 6,3000 -- an increase of 645 -- and that's not counting businesses operating without a license.

"I think there's not enough help for Health Department to check for license or check the salons if they're -- I think they need more help," says Kreytak.

The state recognizes this could become a health issue and has started sweeps in search of illegal operations.

"I think in the long run it's better for us that we went to school than it is for people who just come in and do it under the table," says Parker.

"To me it's not worth just a little shortcuts just to get ahead of someone else. I rather do it the right way," says Kreytak.

"As for us, we don't have to worry because they can come and check all they want because we have our license here at the shop ready to present to them," says Parker.

Nail cosmetics is big business. More than \$6 billion are spent on products and salons in the United States every year.

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