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Position Statement by Chris Adigun, M.D., on Gel Manicure Safety

My name is Chris Adigun, and I am a board certified dermatologist and specialize in nail disorders and nail health. Over the past 5 years I have been researching the safety of gel manicures extensively and presenting my findings to dermatologists at our annual national meetings. Initially, I found that, in general, gels are not terrible for your nails and do not leave any permanent problems. However, the lamp safety continued to come into question, but without adequate research, I could not question their safety with any certainty. Until now.

Since I first presented on gel manicures and the lamps in 2013, there have been a number of well-designed studies evaluating the safety of these lamps--both the traditional fluorescent lamps and the newer LED varieties. The findings are not insignificant—far from it. The findings are actually very concerning. However, gels are great—even life-changing—for many of my patients with disfiguring nail diseases. As I learned more and more about these lamps, all I could think about was how can I still recommend gels when I know the UVA rays emitted from the lamps have the potential to cause harm?

What I found even more concerning are that there are a large number of people that are highly sensitive to UV exposure, whether due to autoimmune diseases or genetic predisposition. Much more commonly, though, are people that are on either medications or supplements that increase their sensitivity to UV exposure—without their knowledge. There are over 100 medications and supplements that cause increased photosensitivity, and the majority of those taking these medications or supplements have no idea that they have this potentially dangerous side effect. Therefore, it is impossible to determine who is more or less vulnerable to the photo-damaging effects of these UVA-emitting nail lamps.

From the data that we have on these gel-curing lamps, I now feel an ethical responsibility to educate the public on my findings. Given what we know at this

point, I feel it is enough to recommend that any person receiving a gel manicure protect their skin thoroughly and adequately.

After extensive research into the UV-protective garments available, I came upon one that met all of my qualifications: the YouVeeShield. It is thoroughly protective (blocks more than any UPF material available), the UPF does not deteriorate over time or with washes, truly is one-size-fits-all, and is affordable. The reality is that many of the gloves that have valid UPF ratings (many are not) are both difficult to remember and expensive, whereas the YouVeeShield is far more economical—and fits in your wallet.

If you have absolutely any questions at all regarding the nail lamp research, or really anything with regards to nails, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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