

EVOLUTION OF THE SIMPLE PEDICURE

MEDI-PEDI; A VALID CLAIM OR JUST A MARKETING PLOY?

BY KATHARIN VON GAVEL



Katharin von Gavel, a featured platform speaker and recognized educator in foot care, has studied Dermatology and Paramedical Esthetics in Europe, and holds degrees in Podology, Chiropody and Pedorthics, and is a Certified Master Pedicurist. As well as teaching advanced foot care for over twenty years across North America, Ms. Von Gavel owned and operated medi-spa clinics for over two decades.

Ms. von Gavel's objective is to improve the professionalism of the foot care industry in the salon and spa sector. Her knowledge and expertise continue to enhance the development of professionals throughout North America.

"My Mission is to change the quality and safety of pedicures in North America one foot at a time."

For years there were basic pedicures, then came the advent of the spa pedicures, which incorporates scents, masks, scrubs, paraffin dips and artistic nail designs. Now comes a new trend in the high-end pedicure service - the next generation of pedicures - the "Medi Pedi".

What is the explanation for this trend?

Surveys are showing that our "over 40's" clients have more concern with the health and wellness of their feet and not just the short term effects of the "feel good" standard pedicure. This demographic group wants to be able to walk and run as well as have their feet look and feel great, for many years to come, unlike their parents before them, whose focus was very different. Studies have also shown a tremendous increase in the number of clients with dry skin, rough heels and various superficial skin and nail conditions. Hence the development of 'Pediceutical' products

Unlike the standard "fluff and buff" pedicures which typically consists of a soothing relaxing service and great choices of hundreds of colors of polish, special foot-bath chairs, the Medi-Pedi takes foot esthetics to a whole new level.

The demand for this new service is coming as much from this discerning clientele now looking for results and changes to their rough skin to ugly nails, as it does from the upscale day spa, wellness spa and medi spa wanting to be able to differentiate their services and justify their pricing. This service also caters to this new breed of client who is also prepared to pay for cleanliness and safety.

One of the other reasons for the increased demand for the Medi-Pedi, is the increasing number of diabetics in North America today. These clients must be extremely careful in choosing their pedicure technician due to the increased possibility of infection by even the most minor nick.

Medi Pedi's are the answer to the needs of all these groups.

What constitutes a Medi-Pedi? Is it a genuine service or just a marketing ploy? Can anyone perform them? What makes them different from a spa or regular pedicure? How does it differ from a "Medical Pedicure"?

These are some of the questions I would like to answer at this time.

A Medi-Pedi is a wellness pedicure...there is no fluff and buff. It means doing a complete foot, nail and skin analysis and client consultation before performing the service. Medi-Pedi's are much more clinical and there are no use of scrubs, masks or paraffin. The technician needs to be able to recognize skin and nail disorders, recommend the correct 'pediceutical' home care and refer to a health professional if necessary. The Medi-Pedi technician uses either 'single use' or 'sterilizable' implements such as stainless steel tools and electric foot files.

Medi Pedi's should be performed only by professional nail technicians who have taken advanced pedicure education, not just continuing education (such as through the North American School of Pedicuring)

This advanced education should give the technician knowledge of the following:

- The use and understanding of proper sanitation, disinfection and sterilization. This subject can easily encompass 2 full days to learn everything about correct cleaning, the effects of Biofilms in footbaths and how to eliminate them, cross-contamination and how it occurs in places we never think about.
- Understanding skin physiology of the feet
- Recognizing different skin and nail conditions on the feet
- Recognizing causes of recurrent skin and foot

EVOLUTION OF THE SIMPLE PEDICURE

problems

- Diabetes education: - recognition of changes on the foot and leg and implications of diabetes on pedicure procedures
- Knowing what type of products to recommend for home maintenance
- Knowing when to refer clients to other health professionals

How does a Medi Pedi differ from other pedicures?

- A comprehensive foot evaluation and a complete consultation are taken for every new client.
- Documented records are kept on all clients including consultation and notes on each visit
- Foot is soaked for no more than 5-10 minutes then not returned to water
- Aggressive or abrasive products are not used on the skin of the foot
- Only professional, fully sterilizable, or single-use, disposable implements are used
- Electric files are used with European-style pedicure-only bits

- Excess pterygium is removed using an electric file or single use, disposable buffers without cutting into or pushing back cuticles
- Toe nail braces are applied if indicated
- Type of Massage is done based on medical condition of person and lower limb evaluation, for example, reflexology, ayurveda, deep tissue, hot stone, etc

A true 'Medical Pedicure' differs in that it is performed either by a medical professional, a foot care nurse, or a technician working under the supervision of a Medical Doctor or Podiatrist. Medical Pedicures are a brand of non-surgical Podiatry and not to be confused with the salon or spa Medi-Pedi

Now it's time for the pedicurists to advance and have a separate and professional identity all of their own. With all the tremendous changes that have happened in skin care, in the esthetics field, in hair care and with nail enhancements over the last many years, the pedicurist is finally able to advance into new realms of professionalism as well.