Eyelash extensions: Are they safe? [1]

Hey Alice!

Do you know anything about the safety of eyelash extensions?

Lulu

Answer

Hey Lulu!

Great question? It? s always important to approach cosmetic opportunities such as these with your eyes wide open! Eyelash extensions are sometimes confused with false eyelashes, which are a set of synthetic lashes that adhere to the eyelid with a sticky strip. These are made for home use and can be purchased at your local drugstore. Eyelash extensions, on the other hand, need to be applied by a trained professional in sanitary conditions. They are a semi-permanent and a much more realistic alternative to falsies. If applied safely and correctly by a professional technician, they are also safer than false eyelashes.

Correctly applied eyelash extensions should be seen but not felt. There are several ways that eyelash extensions can compromise the health of your eyes:

- **Glue fumes.** Salons should be using medical or pharmaceutical grade glue. It is either black (to make it look more like mascara) or clear and it should be free of formaldehyde (ask to see the bottle to check out the ingredients). Non-medical grade glue and glue with formaldehyde can irritate your eyes. Also, the bottle should read ?pharmaceutical grade.?
- **Over use of glue.** Using too much glue can weigh down the lash and cause it to break or fall out, or cause irritation.
- **Careless adhesion.** Careless adhesion can take many forms. The most common is gluing lashes together. Lashes grow at different rates. If a faster-growing lash is glued to a slower-growing lash, the slower lash will be pulled out as the other grows, thinning your lashes and causing an annoying ?pin prick? pain. Careless adhesion can also take the form of gluing several synthetic lashes to one natural lash. These lash bundles, also known as flares, are made to be glued to the lid directly, but some salons are using them as extensions. This is not how it? s supposed to be done! It should be one synthetic lash glued to one natural lash. Gluing bundles to one or more lashes will weigh down and break or tear out lashes, and can even inhibit future growth. But some places do this because it takes much less time than the one-to-one method.
• **Use of allergenic materials.** Some lashes are made of horsehair. Avoid these? they can cause allergies and dermatitis. Ask for synthetic lashes. If you notice any swelling, redness, or eyelid irritation at any point during the time that you have the extensions, ask the salon what materials they used. See if they can help you identify what you may be allergic to.

Applying eyelashes requires professional, hands-on training. Your technician should be able to show you proof of their training; don’t hesitate to ask for it. So, after you’ve done your research and head to the salon, what happens next?

• **You will lie on your back on a table; the technician will sit behind you.** The table is adjusted to the exact right height to allow the technician the optimal posture for applying the extensions.

• **You will have your eyes closed or be looking down.**

• **The technician handles each extension with needle-thin tweezers.** The technician will dip the end of the extension in glue, and then touch the extension to one lash and hold it there for 30-40 second until the lash adheres.

• **Throughout the process, the technician checks to make sure that no lashes are sticking together.**

• **After all extension have been applied, the technician may trim them a bit to give them a natural look.** The whole process can take anywhere from 40-90 minutes, depending on how fidgety you are and how many lashes you have.

The extensions will last anywhere from two to six weeks. Avoiding swimming, eye rubbing, and applying moisture near their eyes, will help the extensions last longer. It is not uncommon for people to go back to the salon for touch ups? after a couple of weeks.

The upside to eyelash extensions is that you can roll out of bed looking like you have mascara on (if that’s your kind of thing). They also look incredibly real. If all the safety precautions have been taken, the only real downside is the price: They can cost anywhere from 200 to 500 dollars for the first application, not including touch ups. For many, that’s nothing to bat an eye at. Sometimes they can be cheaper, but always make sure you check on all those safety concerns before placing extensions on your precious peepers.

Here’s to winks and smiles,

Alice!

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