

beauty q&a



For healthy nails, take a break from polish.

Kate Beckinsale

Q Is it a good idea to let nails breathe between manicures?

A Yes, a few polish-free days is smart. Nails are made of a protein called keratin that is semipermeable. During a manicure, they absorb some water, and typically, polish goes on before they've completely dried out. The moisture, trapped by the coat of lacquer, could lead to a fungal infection, according to Harold Lancer, M.D., a dermatologist in Beverly Hills, California. On top of that, if left on long enough, the chemicals in nail polish can slightly

erode the top layer of keratin, making microscopic perforations. That's not such a big deal for your nails themselves, which are mostly dead tissue, but it does give moisture, the enemy, a way in. Laying off the lacquer for two or three days allows nails to fully dry out. Frequent polish holidays are helpful for another reason: Nails are a good indicator of your health. If yours are splitting, flaky or yellowish, or if you have pain in the nail beds, that might signal problems with your thyroid, hormones or even your heart, and you should consult your doctor. Think of going bare as an opportunity to do a self check, just like a breast or skin self exam.

Q I've lost weight, and my face is thinner. Should I apply my makeup differently?

A First of all, congratulations on your weight loss success! And yes, you should think about changing your makeup. Contoured cheeks may have been cool in the '80s, but the hollowed-out look can make you appear tired. To create the illusion of a fuller face (What irony: Here's a place where you actually *want* to seem rounder!), blend two foundation colors, says Valerie Sarnelle, a makeup artist in Beverly Hills. Apply your usual base all over, then dab one that's a shade lighter in the middle of your chin and right below your cheekbones, and blend; lightening those areas softens any harsh angles. Finish with a pink blush on the apple of your cheeks and flaunt your new look—head to toe!



Full cheeks make you look rested.



Lipstick ingredients shouldn't be a mystery.

Q Is there lead in my lipstick? And if so, should I be worried?

A Possibly, and probably not. The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, an advocacy group in San Francisco, tested 33 lipsticks and reported that 20 (61 percent) had discernible amounts of lead. Although women do ingest small amounts of lipstick over the course of their lifetime through eating, drinking and licking their lips, there's no real danger, according to some scientists. "The traces of lead are so minuscule that the concern is unfounded," says William I. Manton, Ph.D., professor of geosciences at The University of Texas at Dallas, who has studied lead. Still concerned? There are brands that have lead-free options, among them Avon, Tarte, Benefit and Nars. That way, you can have peace of mind *and* pretty lips!

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