

They say eyelash extensions could spread lice, but is it true?



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In many media recently circulated a story that talked about a possible danger caused by false eyelashes. Apparently, they would help the spread of lice and, consequently, would be risky for eye health.

With so much information (and very varied) going around, we set out to investigate in depth on the subject, with experts to help us understand if, indeed, **this beauty accessory could present a health risk** .

Amina Malik, MD, oculoplastic and reconstructive surgery at the Houston Methodist Hospital tells us that eyelash extensions are usually made of silk, mink or synthetic materials, so they don't have lice or demodex. The latter is a mite that is commonly found in the follicles and eyelids of the eyelashes and feeds on dead skin cells or oil from the sebaceous glands of the eyelids.

“They live in the follicles of the eyelashes, and when they are present in high density they can cause infections in the eyelids, which include redness, irritation, pain and visible accumulation of scabs on the eyelashes. **When patients have eyelash extensions placed, they can trap bacteria under their natural eyelashes, which can make eyelid infections worse,**” says the expert.

And he says: “ **I don't think it's the eyelash extensions that are causing the spread of lice** . It is that people who use them do not usually wash them enough, which can cause the accumulation of bacteria, including demodex. ”

What precautions should we take when putting on eyelash extensions, to protect the eyes and the surrounding skin?

"The application of eyelash extensions is a meticulous and delicate work that requires experience, because the eye area is very sensitive," says Dr. Peterson Pierre, a certified specialist in dermatology and cosmetic dermatology at the [Pierre Skin Care Institute](#) .

In addition, the expert advises:

Wash your hands and use clean and disinfected tweezers.

- Check the labels of all the products you use to make sure they do not contain chemical compounds to which you are allergic.
- The adhesive you use must be pharmaceutical grade and safe to use around the eyes
- Rinse the area immediately after application to remove any adhesive residue.

On the other hand, Amina Malik, is more blunt and suggests avoiding them altogether. " **I have seen many complications from using eyelash extensions** , including scratches that threaten the vision in the cornea, conjunctiva infections, allergic reactions on the eyelids and loss of the eyelashes themselves due to the stress caused by the extensions," he says. .

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However, if you still choose to use them, the doctor recommends choosing ones that are light, as they exert less direct pressure on the natural eyelashes; and of shorter length, as you will have less chance of rubbing the eyeball directly.

"Also, you should wash your eyelids thoroughly with a baby shampoo diluted with water, before putting on the eyelashes," he advises.

How to clean the eyelash extensions?

Dr. Peterson Pierre recommends washing your eyes with soap and warm water. "You should avoid oil and alcohol to keep the eyelashes intact, but you can also use a diluted tea tree oil cleaner, for its antibacterial properties. **A cotton swab dipped in micellar water can also be useful .** " recommended.

For its part, Malik recommends washing them daily with a tea tree oil cleaner. "**It should be applied directly on the basis of eyelashes to kill mites,**" he advises and argues that, a study in the British Journal of Ophthalmology showed that demodex could be eradicated within 15 minutes after application of tree oil. tea.