

# What is the reason why many people like to bite their nails so much?

Although knowing that nail biting is a bad habit, there are many people who like to do so. What reason do they like to bite their nails so much?

Although some of us know that nail biting is a bad habit, many people like to do so. What reason do they like to bite their nails so much?

I don't remember when I started biting my nails. This habit goes on like an autonomous machine: when I concentrate on writing a story and before I realize it, my finger has been in my mouth since I was not good, so I kept bite your nails or devour the vegetarian skin on your hand. I hate my nail-biting habit, which makes me feel embarrassed in some cases and I've tried to give up this habit many times. But why don't I still bite my nails? The answer is more complicated than you think so much.



The Duchess of Cambridge is biting her nails during the 2012 London Olympics in Wimbledon. Photo source: Pascal Le Segretain / Getty

In fact, scientists are still finding reasons to explain **why people like to bite their nails so much** . But one thing they know is that this is a **habit** of many people: about 20-30% of the population are nail bites, of which 45% are teenagers. I think that the habit of nail biting is a **sign of anxiety and insecurity** , but research suggests that this is not true. In fact, we often bite our fingernails when we feel **bored, hungry, frustrated** or have to work too hard. The shameful thing is that the feeling of nail biting is very good.



Bite your nails at work. Photo source: Phil Esposito

I know this is hard to believe. If I bite my fingernails for too long, my fingers may bleed and my nails hurt. But biting your nails or devouring the vegetarian skin on your hand feels like a "reward". Tracy Foose, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California Medical School, agrees. Professor Tracy Foose is also a nail biter and she says she did this just because she liked it. Tracy Foose added: "I feel relaxed when I do this".

She also said: "Some studies conducted in animals show that the theory of nail biting has something to do with pleasant feelings. In these studies, when mice were injected. The substance reduces the perception of pain, or endorphins, they will lessen the hair if these pain-relieving endorphins are destroyed by drugs, the animals will clog their fur more. "When we bite our nails - it is a form of beauty and grooming - which helps us feel excited," he said.

If nail biting is similar to the "grooming" of rats, it can be explained why people bite their nails every time they are in a stressful situation or are having to deal with difficulties because we bite nails to help ourselves feel comfortable. Recently, "pleasant" theory has also been supported by a study of the association between nail biting and perfectionism. Kieron O'Connor, a professor of psychology at the University of Montreal, said that people with nail biting habits are perfectionists, who often do it too quickly and become discouraged if they are in a state of free. So, devouring nails helps these people feel more comfortable, less depressed and more excited. "Perfectionism is an important factor, a component that causes this problem," Professor O'Connor said.

## Global demand is an important factor

Several other studies have also shown that nail biters may be inherited from bad habits. Shari Lipner, an assistant to the dermatologist at Weill Cornell, said: "One-third of nail biters say their family members also bite their nails." Lipner added: "When you see a pair of twins with eggs, it's normal for them to have a habit of nail biting."

There is no clear reason why nail biting habits form at an early age. However, according to Foose, bad habits are easy to affect children because part of the brain, called the prefrontal cortex, has the function of making decisions that are still developing. Therefore, if this part of the brain is not fully developed, it means that children are often more motivated than adults. For example, they cannot restrain themselves from eating Halloween candies or sneezing in public places because they do not suffer from social pressure.

Foose also added: " *Children often do all the things that adults might want to do but they think 'I can't do it !'*", " *Adult brains can make them not swerve nose, but not for children* ".

In 2012, a professor of the American Psychiatric Association listed nail biting and some other " *grooming* " conditions such as squeezing acne and hair *clogging as obsessive compulsive disorder ( obsessive compulsive disorders)* . ), abbreviated as OCD. OCD includes those who wash and wash their hands, saying that it is clean or compulsory to put shoes into a straight line. " *Grooming* " and OCD are nearly the same: both cases are natural habits, but nail biting is quite an excess. Some other psychiatrists disagree with the conclusion of the American Psychiatric Association. They point out: "Although nail bites have other mental disorders such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or distressing anxiety syndrome, OCD is an obsessive-compulsive disorder with a control while nail biting is not like that.

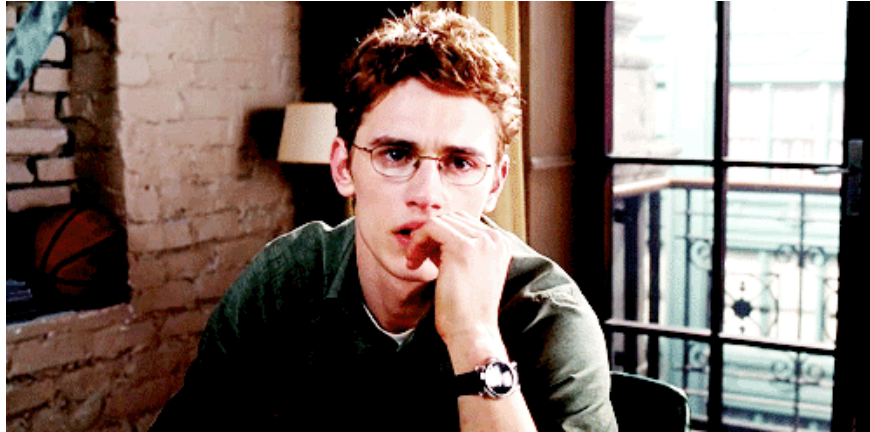


Photo source: Tumblr

" *As an anxiety expert, I think this is a trick for slow disorder,* " Foose said. " *I don't think nail biting is an obsessive-compulsive disorder because it doesn't seem to fit any criteria ,*" O'Connor agreed with Foose.

Whatever the medical definition of nail biting, the habit of nail biting still has bad health consequences. First of all, it is not good for teeth and jaws, can increase your dental costs up to \$ 4,000 throughout your life. Second, it is clear that **nail biting is very dirty** , the area under the nail area is " *a wonderful bacterial breeding ground* ", including E. coli bacteria. Lipner expert said: "When biting nails, bacteria will be introduced into the body causing digestive problems such as nausea and diarrhea".

## Great breeding place of bacteria

The mouth is home to a lot of bacteria, one of which can cause infections for the nails. Warts and herpes can also be transmitted from mouth to hand and vice versa. Foose said: "The *two dirtiest parts of the body are dating together when you bite your nails* ."

Is all of this enough to prevent many nail biting habits? I have tried many methods such as using bitter nail polish, neatly clipping nails, even using electric shock devices when doing bad habits. Also, wearing gloves, nailing with adhesive or personal tape may be useful. Besides, you can replace with other habits such as using stressed balls or using string beads. Resting or meditating are also effective ways to treat perfectionism. However, if nail biting still makes you comfortable, then it is better to leave this habit right away, replace with other more pleasant habits. Personally, apply an effective alternative by reading Harry Potter's story, caressing

my dog ??or eating my homemade pizza.

Try to give up this bad habit with some effective methods outlined above!

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