

Reader's Digest

EVERYDAY WELLNESS

This Is the Only Sunscreen the FDA Wants You to Use

Dawn Yanek March 18, 2019

Everything we thought we knew about sunscreens is changing: Scientists are reviewing the safety of ingredients and—until we know more—this is the only type of sunscreen you should use.

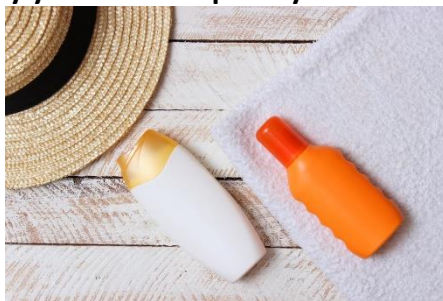
Sunscreens may not be as safe as we thought



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently released a new set of proposals for sunscreen safety, and it only gave its stamp of approval to two active sunscreen ingredients—zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. They're the main components in "physical sunscreens"—they sit on top of the skin and act as a literal barrier to UVA and UVB rays; the most extreme version of a physical sunscreen is the white zinc ointment lifeguards paint on their nose.

What's changed is that chemical sunscreens—the creamy kind most people use—are in the FDA's crosshairs. The agency is asking for more data on 12 very common chemical ingredients—including oxybenzone, avobenzone, octisalate, and octinoxate—to determine their effectiveness and safety. Other proposed changes include calling for sunscreens to provide broad-spectrum coverage and have a minimum SPF of 15, a maximum cap of SPF 60+ instead of SPF 50+, and clearer, more accurate labeling.

Why you should replace your sunscreen



Americans may be better educated than ever about the dangers of sun exposure, but our skin cancer rates—including melanoma, the deadliest type—continue to rise, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. Just a single sunburn can do serious damage, changing your skin's DNA and increase your risk of developing skin cancer at some point in your life. One of the FDA's issues is whether or not sunscreens actually deliver on their SPF promises and provide the protection that users think they're getting. Experts are also concerned about the chemicals potentially disrupting hormones and triggering allergies or other toxic reactions. The bottom line: The right protection now can go a long way toward protecting you in the future. Following are 11 physical sunscreens you'll want to check out—and here are 18 sunscreen mistakes you don't realize you're making.

Excellent protection



Garnering an “excellent” rating from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) for high UV protection and low toxicity, MDSolarSciences Mineral Crème Broad Spectrum SPF 50 Sunscreen is a hypoallergenic, non-comedogenic sunscreen that has an SPF of 50, thanks to its 17 percent zinc oxide and 2 percent titanium dioxide. “Because MD Solar Sciences was created by dermatologists,” says Adarsh Vijay Mudgil, MD, medical director of Mudgil Dermatology, “tremendous care was placed in the selection of each ingredient.” Some of those other ingredients include vitamin C, green tea, and cranberry and pomegranate extracts. Plus, adds Dr. Mudgil, it’s great for sensitive skin: “It was intended for use in all skin types, including those patients with eczema and rosacea.”

Soothing oils plus safe for ocean coral



The 21 percent zinc may be the superstar in MyChelle Dermaceuticals Replenishing Solar Defense Body Lotion SPF 50, a broad-spectrum sunscreen developed for full-body use. But its combination of coconut oil and shea butter comes in a close second. These rich, skin-soothing ingredients make sure that dry, dehydrated summer skin stays supple and smooth. The other great thing about mineral sunscreens? Because they don’t use ingredients like oxybenzone and octinoxate, they’re also safe for the environment—namely the coral reefs, which have been seriously damaged because of sunscreen chemicals. Key West and Hawaii even recently banned the sale of sunscreens with those ingredients for that very reason.

Easy-to-blend broad-spectrum protection



The broad-spectrum Tizo 3 Tinted Face Mineral SPF 40 Sunscreen is specifically designed for your face. It relies on zinc and titanium to provide reliable sun protection, and this tinted SPF40 formulation makes you look effortlessly better. Reviewers rave that it works well under makeup—acting almost like a primer—and that it also evens out skin tone without it. “The tinted version is great because it eliminates the concern that many have about physical blocks and the way they whiten or leave a hazy film on skin,” explains **Jeffrey S. Fromowitz, MD, founder of Dermatology of Boca**. He says that he often recommends Tizo to his patients. “This is elegant and blends with nearly all skin types and colors.”

Sweatproof



Finding a sunscreen that actually sticks to your skin through extreme sweat, swimming, and sun is not easy. The All Good Butter Stick Sport, SPF 50, with a whopping 25 percent of non-nano zinc oxide, does just that, and it goes on, well, like butter thanks to its coconut base. It may take a little extra work to blend into your skin, but it's worth it for the sweat- and water-resistant SPF 50, 80-minute protection.

For really sensitive skin



Dermatologists tend to do (metaphorical) backflips over EltaMD's products, and the EltaMD UV Physical SPF 41 Facial Sunscreen earns particularly high marks for its mineral-based ingredients as well for how gentle it is. And when we say it's gentle, it's *really* gentle: It was created not just for sensitive skin but also for post-procedure skin. Oil-free, paraben-free and fragrance-free, this lightly tinted sunscreen also contains antioxidant protection to counteract aging associated with UV rays and has been recommended by the Skin Cancer Foundation.

A gentle—but strong—screen



The gentle Cotz Plus SPF 58 Water Resistant UVB/UVA Sunscreen for Sensitive Skin features titanium dioxide and zinc oxide in an ultra-micronized (especially tiny particles) form. It also contains submicronized iron oxide, which provides a subtle tint and possibly acts as an additional UV blocker, though the FDA has yet to rule on that claim. The higher SPF, however, *is* something that the FDA has recently changed its stance on: They now approve sunscreens of up to SPF 60 instead of the previous SPF 50. Why? "Evidence shows that most people apply about half the sunscreen they need and forget to reapply; this can reduce the effective SPF the person is getting," says **Dr. Fromowitz**. "As such, higher SPF sunscreen can help compensate for these issues." Still not sure you applied enough sunscreen? Watch for these 12 hidden signs you're about to get a serious sunburn.

Kids will love it



With its tangerine and vanilla scent, Badger SPF 30 Kids Sunscreen might smell like a creamsicle—but don't underestimate the serious punch it packs: With 18.75 percent non-nano zinc oxide, Badger's sunscreen for kids provides strong protection for your little ones' delicate skin. Less is more here: This sunscreen contains only six natural ingredients so you don't have to wonder and worry about a list of unpronounceable chemical substances. Learn more about those ingredients—here's what these 8 labels on your sunscreen really mean.

Something you can wear under makeup



This sunscreen's zinc will protect you, but that's only part of why dermatologists love Isdin's Eryfotona Actinica SPF 50+. It also contains Isdin's trademarked DNA Repairsomes and vitamin E, both of which can help to repair existing sun damage. Plus, it goes on smoothly under makeup, so it's a perfect everyday choice. "It's a very light lotion—considerably lighter than other sunscreens in this category—so it's really easy to spread onto the skin," says Dr. Mudgil. "Patients love it, as do I."

This one's fun for the name alone



The Drunk Elephant Umbra Sheer Daily Defense SPF 30 name may make you laugh, but the benefits it delivers are serious. With its 20 percent zinc oxide, it provides a topical barrier to the sun, and it's free of essential oils, alcohol, silicone, chemical screens, fragrances, and sodium lauryl sulfate; the company refers to these ingredients as the "Suspicious 6" because many experts believe they cause skin problems. This natural-based philosophy extends to the Umbra Sheer's other ingredients, including raspberry seed and marula oils, as well as the antioxidants astaxanthin, grape juice extract, and sunflower shoot extract. The result? A lightweight, moisturizing, and irritant-free product. While you need sunscreen to protect your skin, you want to make sure you don't fall for these 15 skin cancer myths.

A great deal



The price is right—you can slather Aveeno Positively Mineral Sensitive Skin Daily Sunscreen SPF 50 all over your body without worrying it'll break the bank while protecting you. And you really do need enough of the good stuff to protect you properly: A recent British study found that most people apply only a thin layer of sunscreen and as a result get just 40 percent of the protection that it should provide. At just \$13, this Aveeno formulation's 21.6 percent zinc will protect you for up to 80 minutes, through sweat or water. It also contains oats, which moisturize and hydrate skin.

Three-way protection



The protection from this mineral formulation from Glo Skin Beauty Solar Shade SPF 50 Natural Mineral Face Sunscreen is threefold. It shields you from harmful UV rays with its 14.5 percent combination of zinc and titanium, it nourishes skin with moisture-locking sodium hyaluronate and soothing vitamin E, and it protects animals while accomplishing all of that. The entire Glo Skin line gets PETA's cruelty-free seal of approval, since not one bit of it is tested on animals. Check out these 12 sunburn myths that are damaging your skin.

<https://www.rd.com/health/wellness/only-sunscreen-fda-wants-use/>