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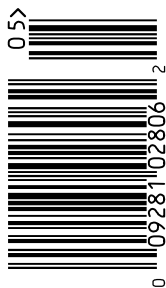
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safe
sunscreens

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HOW TO CHOOSE
CLEAN, EFFECTIVE
PROTECTION FOR
YOUR SKIN

Summer presents a bit of a conundrum. You dream of dashing out into the sun's freshly cast golden hue, but the radiant blaze that calls you does more than boost happiness and provide a wicked tan—it also boosts your risk of burns, skin cancer, and premature aging. To prevent this, we slather on sunscreen!

BY MICHAEL A. MILLER

But what if your sunscreen was loaded with chemicals toxic to you and the environment? What if you were only stopping half of the sun's harmful radiation? What if your hard-earned money was falling victim to empty marketing lingo? Simply applying sunscreen is not as simple as we once thought. Here are our best tips for safe fun in the sun.

Go broad. Look for broad spectrum options to cover yourself from UVB as well as UVA rays. Sunburn Protection Factor (SPF) protects you from the UVB spectrum (think burns), but experts say UVA rays cause the most damage because they penetrate year-round and pass through windows thanks to their longer wavelength. Additionally, UVA rays don't cause your skin to burn so you won't be painfully alerted to resulting photoaging and other malignancies.

Zinc is in. Zinc oxide is a broad-spectrum, natural active ingredient for deflecting solar damage. You might look a little ghostlier than your peers, but you won't be slathering harmful chemicals on your body and leeching them into the water causing death to precious coral reefs. Mineral sunscreens like zinc oxide work by physically reflecting UV rays whereas chemical sunscreens absorb them in place of your skin. Titanium dioxide is another good mineral option that defends you from broad-spectrum rays almost as efficiently as zinc.

Oxybenzone is out. In a recent study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found oxybenzone in the urine samples of 97 percent of participants. According to research, this chemical is likely responsible for hormone disruption and other maladies. Additional studies have shown it can alter sperm production in animals. Visit ewg.com for the Environmental Working Group's list of sunscreen's synthetic offenders and their health concerns.



10 A.M. TO 4 P.M. The most hazardous hours of the day for UV exposure in the continental United States. It's best to take a break and seek shelter under a beach umbrella. *Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Nay to spray. Ditch aerosol and even non-aerosol spray-on sunscreens. Even if you have Robin Hood aim, some of that sunscreen will miss its intended target. In addition to toxins in the sunscreen itself, the chemical dispersants in these products may be harmful to the environment and your respiratory system. Plus, your friends don't like it when they're standing downwind and catch a mouthful.

The SPF is a lie. Many consumers purchase sunscreen based on SPF ratings, because SPF 30 is twice as protective as SPF 15, right? Not true. "An SPF 15 will block about 93 percent of the UVB rays, an SPF 30 will block about 97 percent. Moving to an SPF 50 will only block about 1 percent more UVB rays than an SPF 30! It's very deceptive," said Autumn Blum, cosmetic chemist at Stream2Sea. So, next time you see SPF 50 sunscreen in the pharmacy aisle, just keep walking.

Apply early and reapply often. If you're not going with mineral sunscreen, which goes into effect instantly, your protection needs 15 to 30 minutes to absorb. Apply before leaving home for your luminous adventure. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends reapplying every two hours and after swimming or sweating.

Seek shade. Midday is when the sun is most brutal, and can be too much for even the most ardent applier of sunscreen. It's best to take a lunch break and seek refuge under a cute beach umbrella with a good book.

UV Index. Before going out, check the UV index, provided daily by the National Weather Service. Anything below two equates to low risk, three to five is moderate, and anything above 11 is considered extreme.

Cover up. Wear dark and tightly woven clothes that contain SPF protection when possible. Also rock a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. Look for shades that offer broad-spectrum protection, which include pretty much all sunglasses sold in the US, according to the CDC. [NS](#)

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States.

3,500,000: the number of cases that are diagnosed annually.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency



JOHN MASTERS ORGANICS
John Masters' SPF 30 Natural Mineral Sunscreen is exactly that—a gentle and moisturizing protective layer with broad spectrum protection. // johnmasters.com

KARI GRAN
You can't hide from skin-aging UVA rays, even during winter—and now you don't have to. Kari Gran's Three Sixty Five SPF 28 is a gloriously natural facial sunscreen designed to be used every day of the year. // karigran.com



GLO THERAPEUTICS
Glo Therapeutics' Solar Shade SPF 50 is a lightweight blend of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, boosted by soothing antioxidants and conditioners that go easy on sensitive skin. // gloprofessional.com



SUNSCREEN PICKS



ÉMINENCE ORGANIC SKINCARE
If you're after a sun-kissed look (and really, who isn't?), we recommend the Organic Sun Defense Cinnamon Bronzer. The luxurious mineral powder yields water-resistant SPF 30 sun protection and a smooth, matte finish. // eminenceorganics.com/us

GLO MINERALS
Prep for flawless complexion with this Tinted Primer SPF 30 from Glo Minerals, which evens skin tone and protects with natural broad-spectrum, oil-free armor. // gloprofessional.com



OSMOTICS COSMECEUTICALS
Enhance your natural complexion with a daily dollop of broad-spectrum sun protection with Age Prevention Sheer Facial Tint SPF 45 from Osmotics Cosmeceuticals. Always non-oily and perfect for all skin types, no one will be left out in the sun unprotected. // osmotics.com



HYDROCHIC
For protection that lasts even after a good swim, Hydrochic has you covered—literally. Don this cute UPF 50+ UV protected Slim Fit Long Sleeve Rashguard and cast your sunburn worries to the ocean breeze. // hydrochic.com



LIFE EXTENSION
Now trending is sun protection from within. Life Extension's Shade Factor supplement nourishes skin with free-radical busting antioxidants to win the sunny day against deep-penetrating UVA damage. // lifeextension.com



MIRA RAE
Sun protection is vital even on the way to yoga class. We love the Maya Harem pants from Mira Rae for their relaxed fit and unrelenting UV protection for your stalks. // mirarae.com



JANE IREDALE
Sun bathing has never been as luxurious as it is with Jane Iredale's Powder-Me SPF 30 Dry Sunscreen. Water resistant up to 40 minutes and available in three shades—translucent, golden, and tanned—you can safely lie in the sun and get your color too. // janeiredale.com