

# MAY IS NATIONAL SUN AWARENESS MONTH



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## Choosing the Right Sunscreen

Did you know that according to the American Cancer Society, more than 2 million people are diagnosed with skin cancer in the US each year? The best way to protect your skin (your largest organ) from the sun is to always seek shade when possible, and use protective clothing like hats, eyeglasses, long sleeves, and pants. But if those options are not available, you should use sunscreen if you are going to be outside for a long period of time. But do you know which sunscreen is the safest to put on your skin?

When choosing a sunscreen, look for one that protect from both UV-A and UV-B radiation. These forms of radiation are shown to cause tanning, sunburns, wrinkling, premature aging, and skin cancer after long exposures in the sun without protection.

## Chemical or Physical Sunscreen?

Chemical sunscreens - Work by absorbing UV radiation.

- Apply 30 minutes before sun exposure.
- Known to irritate eyes and skin.
- The most common chemical UV filter ingredient is Avobenzone, which degrades after being exposed to sunlight in less than one hour. It also degrades on contact with other UV filters such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, and with metal ions such as iron oxide, which is commonly found in makeup.

Avobenzone has been found to produce free radicals after just sitting on the skin for one hour. Children and pregnant women are advised not to use products containing it.

Octocrylene, which is used in many chemical sunscreens as a stabilizer, is an endocrine disrupter, and can cause skin irritation. Endocrine disruptors interfere with your body's endocrine system by mimicking naturally-occurring hormones like estrogen (the female sex hormone), androgen (the male sex hormone), and thyroid hormones, causing overstimulation of these hormones

Physical sunscreens - Work by reflecting UV radiation

- Starts working once applied, and provides UV-A and UV-B protection.
- Does not irritate your eyes or skin.
- Ingredients protect by forming a layer on the surface of your skin. So no harmful ingredients are absorbed directly into your bloodstream.
- Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are the most common ingredients in physical sunscreens. These compounds show no sign of degradation after more than two hours of sun exposure.

The FDA has considered zinc oxide and titanium dioxide to be safe ingredients, but they do have their downsides. They tend to feel thick and greasy, and since they lay on top of your skin, they generally leave a white residue behind. But with new technology, there are more physical sunscreens coming to the market that apply on clear.

### **Recommended Physical Sunscreens**

- ThinkSport LIVESTRONG Sunscreen with SPF 30
- Badger Sunscreen Cream, Unscented with SPF 30
- Andalou Naturals All in One Beauty Balm, Sheer Tint with SPF 30
- Healing-Scents Live Long Mineral Based Sunscreen with SPF 25
- ECO logical skin care Baby All Natural Sunscreen with SPF 30

\*Visit my website for links to the above recommended physical sunscreens\*

If you are feeling adventurous, you can make your own physical sunscreen by following the recipe on this website:

<http://wellnessmama.com/2558/homemade-sunscreen/>