



Choosing a Sunscreen

The days are becoming longer, and the sun's rays are intensifying. Recent research suggests letting our skin soak up Vitamin D provided naturally by the sun is beneficial. However, we must protect our skin from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation - both the deeply-penetrating UVA and the shorter-wave UVB. We can protect our skin with sunscreen, but which sunscreens can be tolerated by our sensitive skin?

The best sunscreen is the one that you will use!

Generally speaking, dermatologists recommend sunscreens based on *physical blockers* like titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Physical blockers sit on the skin's surface and contain inorganic compounds like titanium dioxide or zinc oxide that are not absorbed into the skin. Light is either absorbed into sun block material or reflected away from the skin, similar to a mirror or aluminum foil. Sunscreens based on chemical sunscreens, on the other hand, are absorbed by the skin. Sunlight is deactivated or degraded after contact with the organic chemicals contained in the sunscreen. Chemical sunscreens typically contain a range of ingredients like benzones, amino benzoic acid and cinnamates.

Dermatologists also recommend avoiding sunscreens that contain fragrance or tropical oils. They may suggest using a powder sunscreen or gel sunscreen. Mineral make-up sits on the skin so it does not get absorbed or block pores. Gel sunscreens are also generally very light and "breathable".

Alisa Fleming at www.GoDairyFree.org has compiled a list of sun protection brands that cater to vegans, sensitive skin, and ... food allergies. You can find the listing at: <http://www.godairyfree.org/200905253415/News/Nutrition-Headlines/Choosing-a-Sunscreen-for-Sensitive-Skin-and-Allergies.html>. The article includes a listing of sunscreens and other cosmetic products that have allergy information on their websites. Many other companies will answer questions about allergies on the phone.

Being smart in the sun also includes avoiding the midday sun, staying in the shade when you can, and wearing a hat and sun protective clothing. Use an SPF of 15 or higher, and reapply it every two hours or more often if you are swimming or sweating.

Have you found a sunscreen that works well for you or your child? Please tell us about it at info@nationaleczema.org.

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