



safe sunscreen guide

Hormone disruptors, toxins, carcinogens, preservatives in many popular sunscreens can negatively impact people, corals, aquatic and marine life. In 2018, Hawai'i passed a ban on sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate – two of the more dangerous ingredients – which goes into effect in 2021. Still stores continue to sell them. Many brands that removed these two chemicals from some of their formulations now label them as “reef safe” as if simply not containing oxybenzone and octinoxate automatically equate to a product being safe. There are no regulations on the term “reef safe”, “coral safe” or “safe” in general. In fact there are many questionable active and inactive ingredients commonly used. Some we try to avoid include: oxybenzone, homosalate, octisalate, octinoxate, octocrylene, avobenzone, dimethicone, parabens, BHT, nanoparticles, propylene glycol, synthetic fragrances, retinyl palmitate, cocamide dea, phenoxyethanol. Always check the bottle.

While nothing is perfect, we look for sunscreens that are safer for people and the environment. When choosing a sunscreen we like broad spectrum protection from minerals such as non-nano zinc oxide (or titanium dioxide) in a natural base. Zinc content should be 18% or more. If you're looking for water resistance, you may want to avoid water-soluble ingredients (H₂O, alcohol, aloe) which require added emulsifiers and preservatives. Avoid chemical aerosols as these do not apply evenly, atomize toxins making them airborne, travel hundreds of feet in the wind, get into people's lungs, coat sand & enter the ocean at high tide. FDA recommends to never spray these directly on children. Even with mineral sprays, be respectful and apply them away from others. Inhalation of TiO₂ and silica can cause lung damage, irritation, inflammation.

In the past couple of years safer sunscreens have become more readily available. If your fave shop doesn't stock any, pass this list along to their buyer! Tell them to get their store Safe Sunscreen Certified at sunscreensafe.com. Many of these natural sunscreen companies are small – support them by shopping direct on their site. These brands may seem more costly, but many are concentrated formulations, utilizing pure quality non-GMO, organic ingredients. They often stay on longer and are much more efficient, providing a physical block, while chemicals absorb heat from UV rays and can only absorb so much (which is why you must reapply so often). Also consider looking at ounces included. In sunscreen sticks for example, some brands have less than .25 ounces, while others can be a full ounce or more.

Never solely depend on sunscreen!: Seek shade, utilize sun protective clothing (dark), avoid scrubbing sebum (natural body oils with SPF) off skin with hot water and soaps before going into the sun, avoid photosensitizing oils.

This information is for educational purposes. Check for FDA guidelines and updates. Research for yourself.

These guides are updated once or twice a year. There are many quality sunscreens; we can not list them all. Check back to learn about other brands we may include in the future. Do you have an eco-friendly sunscreen? Let us know.

Send samples to: Ban Toxic Sunscreens, PO Box 1208, Kilauea, HI 96754

Want to try some of these and other safe brands, check sunscreensafe.com shop for Safe Sunscreen Boxes. Want to help spread the word, make sure to also get some of our educational materials: sunscreen cards, signs and more.

Mahalo.

zinc formulations...



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