



## How to Choose a Sunscreen

The following information is meant to be used as an informational resource about what sunscreens are and a guide on how to choose one. There are other ways to protect skin from ultraviolet (UV) rays including sun-protective clothing, hats, sunglasses, lip protectant with sunscreen, shade, and avoidance of tanning beds. The Indiana Academy of Dermatology does not endorse any particular brand of sunscreen.

### Types of Sunscreen:

Sunscreens come in many FDA accepted forms including:

Lotions	Sprays	Oils	Butters
Creams	Sticks	Pastes	Gels

### Sunscreen Ingredients:

The active ingredients of a sunscreen are what provide protection from the sun's UV rays and help protect from sunburn and skin damage. There are chemical (also known as organic) sunscreen filters and physical (also known as inorganic) sunscreen filters. The FDA lists the following acceptable active ingredients in products labeled as a sunscreen:

Aminobenzoic acid	Menthyl anthranilate	Padimate O
Avobenzene	Octocrylene	Phenylbenzimidazole sulfonic acid
Cinoxate	Octyl methoxycinnamate	Sulisobenzene
Dioxybenzone	Octyl salicylate	Titanium dioxide *
Homosalate	Oxybenzone	Trolamine salicylate
		Zinc oxide *

\*Titanium dioxide and zinc oxide are physical sunscreen ingredients that have a very low risk of allergy. Sunscreens containing these ingredients are great for children and for people with sensitive skin.

### Sunscreen Label:

The Indiana Academy of Dermatology recommends that you use a sunscreen labeled as “**Broad Spectrum**” which means it protects from both UVA and UVB radiation. We also recommend a sunscreen with an **SPF of 30 or greater**. The SPF (sun protection factor) indicates the level of protection from UVB-induced sunburn that the sunscreen product provides. The higher the SPF number, the greater the sunburn protection. When you anticipate being sweaty or wet (e.g. swimming), it is also a good idea to choose a sunscreen that is **water- and sweat-resistant 40 minutes or 80 minutes**. There is no such thing as a “*waterproof*” sunscreen. Finally, check the expiration date! If the sunscreen is expired, don't use it. If there is no expiration date on the product, throw it out after one year and get new sunscreen.

For more information on how to protect your skin and reduce your risk of skin cancer, see a board-certified dermatologist.

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