

Skin



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You might feel safe buying sunscreen with a high SPF (sun protection factor), but New York Sen. Chuck Schumer says, not so fast. Citing a recent study from *Consumer Reports*, he says Americans are getting

According to the *New York Daily News*, the senator cited research that revealed more than 40 percent of kids sunscreen with SPF 50, it may not mean your kids are being any better protected than if you were to buy them SPF 30, SPF 42.

The senator is calling on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to move more swiftly in implementing strategies outlined in the Sunscreen Innovation Act passed by Congress in 2014. Schumer said he wants the FDA to investigate all products on the market, making sure each meets the standards set by the legislature to help keep skin safe from the UV rays that lead to deadly cancers.

According to Sonya Lunder, senior analyst at the Environmental Working Group (EWG), the EWG agrees performance in a real-world test. The EWG agrees that sunscreen with SPF 50 does not perform better than SPF 30 or 42.

There are many reasons the American public believes high SPF's are safer than they actually are. While the FDA does some testing, higher SPF's are left to the manufacturer and much of the testing could be done without smearing, swimming, toweling off, and so forth. In addition, even small differences in the amounts of sunscreen applied could ultimately lead to huge differences in the actual sun protection factor and a faulty SPF.

A high SPF can also be misleading and give a false sense of security, prompting some countries to ban SPF's higher than 50. Not only is there very little difference in protection from 50 to 100 (or greater), but lots of people get burned by SPF 50+ lotions. Also, opt for lotions over sticks or sprays, as they are more effective. For more information on the most effective products with the safe ingredients (like those formulated without hormone disruptors), see the EWG's [Guide to Sunscreens](#).

David Andrews, EWG senior scientist, tells Yahoo Beauty there are some strategies you can use to make sure your family is well protected against UV damage. He encourages consumers to flip the bottle over and read the ingredients list. He also suggests looking for products that are labeled "fragrance-free" and "paraben-free".

Andrews says if your sunscreen has an SPF of between 30 and 50, and you see 3 percent avobenzone or 15 percent homosalate, that's a good sign. Also, opt for lotions over sticks or sprays, as they are more effective. For more information on the most effective products with the safe ingredients (like those formulated without hormone disruptors), see the EWG's [Guide to Sunscreens](#).

When it comes to application, do so thoughtfully, says Gary Goldenberg, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He suggests applying sunscreen 15-20 minutes before going outside. He also suggests reapplying every two hours, or more often if you are sweating or swimming. He also suggests using a tanning bed as a last resort, as they can be harmful to your skin.

Goldenberg says that he always chooses sunscreens from trusted brands, with *Consumer Reports* as an excellent resource. He recommends La Roche-Posay and EltaMD for sensitive skin, and Coppertone Sport SPF 50 for adults or kids with sensitive skin. I recommend Vanicream SPF 50 for sensitive skin.