

New FDA Sunscreen Filter Bemotrizinol Explained By Experts

⌚ 4 min read

- *The United States Food & Drug Administration recently announced that it was proposing to add a new sunscreen ingredient to its list of approved filters for American consumers.*
- *The ingredient is currently available in Europe and has many unique attributes that make American dermatologists excited about the prospect of it's being available in our country.*
- *The proposed ingredient is gentler, longer-lasting, and provides better protection from UVA radiation than some of the current filters available.*

It's easy to assume the sunscreen available to you in the US is identical to the types everyone else is slathering on around the world. It's not that simple, though. There are only a few [sunscreen ingredients](#) available in our country currently, but, now, the United States Food & Drug Administration is looking to add another one to that list.

The agency [announced](#) on Thursday that officials want to add bemotrizinol, which is currently available in Europe, as a permitted active ingredient for use in sunscreens. Right now, the FDA [only recognizes](#) two sunscreen active ingredients as Generally Recognized As Safe and Effective (GRASE)—the [mineral sunscreens](#) zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Many common chemical filters like oxybenzone and avobenzone are under safety review, which means that while they are still currently available to the purchasing public, the jury is still out as to whether or not there are long-term safety risks associated with their usage.
(Bemotrizinol would fall under the chemical sunscreen umbrella.)

Meet the experts: [Joshua Zeichner](#), MD, is the director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. [Gary Goldenberg](#), MD, is a board-certified dermatologist practicing in New York City. Ife J. Rodney, MD, is a dermatologist and founding director of [Eternal Dermatology Aesthetics](#)

While nothing has been finalized yet, this could help to bring American sunscreens up to the level of their European counterparts, which have a reputation for being more advanced and just plain better.

Dermatologists are all for this move. Here's what they want you to know.

What is bemotrizinol?

Bemotrizinol is a chemical UV filter that has been available in Europe for decades, explains [Joshua Zeichner](#), MD, director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. "It has an advantage over other chemical UV filters currently available the US because it provides broader protection against UV light, including long-wave UVA rays, which is the wavelength thought to penetrate most deeply into the skin and be most associated with the development of skin cancers," he says. "Currently available sunscreen filters do a poor job at blocking these long-wave UVA rays." He also shares that the ingredient is unlikely to irritate even the most sensitive skin types.

Another big plus is that bemotrizinol is also photostable, which means it doesn't quickly break down in the sun, adds Ife J. Rodney, MD, dermatologist and founding director of [Eternal Dermatology Aesthetics](#). "That means it may last longer on the skin," she says. This is a big advancement as experts know that in order to get long-lasting protection, you must use [the right amount](#)—and reapply frequently.

Dermatologists are all for this.

One more big perk of bemotrizinol is that it "plays well with other sunscreen ingredients," says [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), a board-certified dermatologist practicing in New York City, providing a higher SPF at

lower doses, too. This could be why our experts are encouraged by the prospect of the ingredient being fully approved for us by the FDA, with Zeichner calling the news “extremely exciting.” Goldenberg agrees. “This is excellent news and long overdue,” he says. “We have been stuck in the past, while the rest of the world enjoys superior formulas with lightweight, elegant, safer sunscreens with better protection.”

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Another sunscreen ingredient will allow give people better tools to protect against the sun’s harmful rays, Zeichner says. “Ultimately this will mean fewer skin cancers, including melanomas, which are potentially fatal,” he adds. Rodney says this move is also a big win for

people with sensitive skin. “It can be very useful for people with some sensitive skin types who have trouble finding a sunscreen that won’t irritate their skin,” she says.

When will bemotrizinol be approved?

No date has been set yet, but FDA officials have made it clear they’d like to make this available sooner rather than later. “The agency has historically moved too slowly in this area, leaving Americans with fewer options than consumers abroad. We’re continuing to modernize the regulation of sunscreen and other over-the-counter drug products,” FDA Commissioner Marty Makary, said in a [statement](#). “Americans deserve timely access to the best safe, effective, and consumer-friendly over-the-counter products available.”

A new sunscreen can be brought to market without an approved drug application if it meets certain requirements, according to the FDA. From here, bemotrizinol will go through a public comment period on the proposal to approve the ingredient before the FDA actually makes it available for use.

Zeichner can’t wait. “As soon as sunscreens in the US begin to be produced with bemotrizinol, I can tell you that I will be the first in line to purchase it,” he says. In the meantime, here are a few SPF products that are currently available and approved by the *Women’s Health* beauty team.

3 Chemical Sunscreens For All Skin Types

Best For Dry Skin

Neutrogena®

DERMATOLOGIST RECOMMENDED BRAND

Hydro Boost

water gel lotion
sunscreen

BROAD SPECTRUM SPF 50

50

helioplex®
broad spectrum uva+uvb

invisible finish
oxybenzone free
water resistant (80 minutes)

3.0 FL OZ (88mL)

Neutrogena Hydro Boost Moisturizing Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50

Now 11% Off

[\\$14 \\$12 at Amazon](#)

[\\$12 at Walmart](#)[\\$19 at Ulta Beauty](#)

A mix of chemical filters gets a boost from hyaluronic acid to provide a moisturizing experience that's completely non-comedogenic (meaning it won't clog your pores).

Best For Oily Skin

SHISEIDO
Ultimate Sun Protector
Lotion



BROAD SPECTRUM
SPF 60+
WATER RESISTANT
(80 MINUTES)
SUNSCREEN

Shiseido Ultimate Sun Protector Face and Body Lotion SPF 60+ Sunscreen

[\\$52 at Amazon](#)

[\\$52 at Nordstrom](#)[\\$47 at Walmart](#)

This unique formula actually [works better when you sweat](#), making it a great option for those who work out regularly (hello, that's you). Plus, it features licorice root extract, which is proven to soothe breakouts.

Best For Sensitive Skin



La Roche-Posay Anthelios UV Hydra Daily Invisible Sunscreen

[\\$24 at CVS](#)

Chemical sunscreens can be tricky to use if you have highly reactive skin. Luckily, this one contains La Roche-Posay's thermal spring water to calm your outer layer.

3 Mineral Sunscreens For All Skin Types

Best For Dry Skin



Tatcha The Silk Sunscreen SPF 50

[\\$64 at Amazon](#)

[\\$64 at Tatcha](#)[\\$64 at Ulta Beauty](#)

Sure, there are less expensive options out there, but none can give you the benefits of this formula, which includes supercharged zinc oxide (that goes on sheer), hyaluronic acid and niacinamide to hydrate and soothe, and silk extract to smooth skin's texture.

Best For Sensitive Skin



Ultra Violette Supreme Screen SPF 50

[\\$36 at Sephora](#)

No one does sunscreen like Australians, and this Ozzie brand—new to the U.S.—has delivered an incredible formula that works well on all skin types, even the most sensitive. The secret: a hefty does of hydrating squalane to soothe an impaired skin barrier.

Best For Oily Skin



Olehenriksen Banana Bright Mineral Face Sunscreen SPF 30

[\\$35 at Revolve](#)

[\\$35 at Ulta Beauty](#)[\\$35 at Sephora](#)

This brightening SPF (with niacinamide and vitamin C) works wonders: It features a forgiving texture that won't exacerbate the struggles of those with overactive sebaceous glands (read: it's slightly mattifying).



[Korin Miller](#)

Korin Miller is a freelance writer specializing in general wellness, sexual health and relationships, and lifestyle trends, with work appearing in Men's Health, Women's Health, Self, Glamour, and more. She has a master's degree from American University, lives by the beach, and hopes to own a teacup pig and taco truck one day.



Reviewed by[Brian Underwood](#)

Beauty Director

Brian Underwood is beauty director at Women's Health, where he oversees content strategy for the brand across all platforms, including digital, print, and social. Underwood previously served as beauty and wellness director at Oprah Daily and O, The Oprah Magazine. During his tenure leading beauty content for the Oprah brand at Hearst, stories Underwood commissioned were awarded the Skin Cancer Foundation Media Award and a Fragrance Award for Editorial Excellence (his second). He was the launch Beauty Director of Dr. Oz THE GOOD LIFE, and has held additional editorial positions at Fitness, Organic Style, Good Housekeeping, Life & Style Weekly, and Woman's Day and has written for Self, Shape, Seventeen, Redbook, Cosmopolitan, and many more. Underwood previously served on the Skin Cancer Foundation's gala committee and as partnerships director of the Trans Beauty Clinic, a New

York-based charitable organization that provided beauty services and workshops to the city's trans community.

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