

Beauty Experts Found the Best Sunscreens to Buy This Spring—Starting at \$10

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I've written extensively about sunscreen since 2019, most recently in our guide to SPF facts, powder sunscreen, and how one dermatologist uses it as a dry shampoo hack. But if you're looking for a one-and-done power list of the best sunscreens of 2026, this is it.

So why am I low-key obsessed with wearing sunscreen? Allow dermatologist Gary Goldenberg, MD, to explain. "Daily sunscreen use is important for two main reasons: Skin cancer prevention and anti-aging," he says. And the data backs him up. An [Australian study](#) tracked the skin of people who wore daily sunscreen regardless of weather and activities versus those who only wore SPF on sunny days or when they're outdoors. The study evaluated their skin texture (microtopography) to evaluate aging and found that people who applied sunscreen daily aged significantly better than those who wore SPF occasionally. BRB, time to hit auto-subscribe on these [Amazon sunscreens](#).

Best Sunscreens of 2026

- **Best Overall:** [Isdin Eryfotona Ageless SPF 50](#)
- **Best Budget:** [Neutrogena Beach Defense Sunscreen Stick SPF 50](#)
- **Best Mineral Sunscreen:** [EltaMD UV Daily Broad-Spectrum SPF 40](#)
- **Best For Exercise:** [Play Everyday Lotion SPF 50 Sunscreen](#)
- **Best Tinted Sunscreen:** [Tower28 SunnyDays SPF 30 Tinted Sunscreen Foundation](#)

And sunscreen's benefits don't stop there. Sun damage accumulates from daily activities like driving and sitting in front of a window, says dermatologist [Hadley King, MD](#). As spring blooms, and Memorial Day is several weeks away, it's time to double down on sunscreen. Here's how to buy SPF like a dermatologist and beauty editor.

What To Consider

Broad Spectrum

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun falls into two categories: ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB). UVA rays cause signs of aging, such as hyperpigmentation, lines, and wrinkles. Meanwhile, UVB rays can cause more serious damage, including sunburn and skin cancer. Your safest bet is to only use broad-spectrum sunscreens to help protect against UVA and UVB rays.

SPF Type: Mineral vs. Chemical Blockers

Next, choose either a mineral or a chemical sunscreen. Here's more insight to help you determine between the two formulations.

Mineral Sunscreen aka Physical Sunscreens

- **Active ingredients** are zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Tinted mineral sunscreens contain iron oxides, which can help reduce hyperpigmentation.
- **How do mineral sunscreens work?** They create a physical barrier that reflects and scatters UV rays away from the skin's surface, says dermatologist [Divya Shokeen, MD](#).
- **Pros:** Mineral sunscreens offer instant broad-spectrum protection, says dermatologist [Caren Campbell, MD](#). They are also safer for sensitive and acne-prone skin. Another bonus of using a physical sunscreen is that its [ingredients are safer to use during pregnancy](#).

Cons: Mineral sunscreens are more likely to leave behind a cast on melanin-rich complexions.

Chemical Sunscreen

- **Active ingredients** are avobenzone, homosalate, octisalate, and octocrylene.
- **How do they work?** "Chemical filters absorb the sun's rays, deflecting their damage by turning them into heat," says Dr. Shokeen.
- **Pros:** They are acne-safe and tend to be easier to rub in and for the skin to absorb, says dermatologist [Sheila Farhang, MD](#). They're also less likely to leave behind an ashy finish on Brown and Black skin.
- **Cons:** They can irritate sensitive skin and require a 15-20 minute waiting period before being effective against sun exposure.

TL;DR

They both have benefits and limitations, but ultimately, the best one is the sunscreen you'll actually use and reapply. As for me? Well, I like both types. However, I typically use mineral sunscreen on my face, so I can head outside immediately after work instead of lingering for the approximately 15-minute waiting period associated with chemical sunscreens.

Key Ingredients

Broad-spectrum coverage, sunscreen type, and SPF coverage are the big three considerations. But another factor worth emphasizing is other non-active skincare ingredients that will help bolster your complexion.

Dermatologist Elyse Love, MD, is a big fan of [niacinamide](#) to calm the skin and improve its tone and texture. Also, look for ingredients that support your skin type and goals. For example, if you want to brighten your complexion, you'll look for a sunscreen with [vitamin C](#). If you have dry skin, seek out hydrating ingredients like [hyaluronic acid](#).

How We Chose

When we initially published this story in May 2019, it was a gallery featuring a handful of sunscreens. Nearly seven years later, we've seriously upgraded our product vetting process.

For starters, we polled dermatologists about the actual sunscreens they use IRL and recommend to patients. The doctors answered a series of questions about the efficacy, application, and real-world testing experience that helped inform their suggestions.

Next, evaluate the hundreds of sunscreens in the *Women's Health* beauty closet.

I also polled *Women's Health* and *Men's Health* editors about their ride or die sunscreens. Our team varies across age, skin type, complexion, budget, and lifestyle. For example, fitness editor [Cori Ritchey, C.S.C.S.](#), is a certified strength and condition coach and group fitness instructor. She has a no-frills approach to beauty and wants a simple sunscreen that delivers results which she found in [La Roche-Posay](#).

Clear sunscreens were carefully evaluated. Our team asked ourselves if the clear sunscreens squeezed out clear or were they white or creamy and then blended out without a trace? Associate Health & Fitness Editor [Addison Aloian](#) and editorial assistant [Katie Mogg](#) found success with [Supergoop!](#)

Tinted sunscreens were also inspected because I know first hand what it's like to try and find your best color match only for it to look ruddy or cool in natural sunlight. With 17 flexible shades, [Tower28](#) delivers the most inclusive range among the sunscreens we vetted. The hues vary in depth and undertone, and offer light-to-medium coverage.

Whether you have oily, dry, or combination skin, there's something on our list for you. Meet our team's all-time favorite sunscreens that we'll continue to rely on throughout 2026.

Meet the Experts

- Gary Goldenberg, MD, is a board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Goldenberg Dermatology](#) in New York City.
- [Mona Gohara, MD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist and *Women's Health* advisor.
- [Elyse Love, MD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist at GlamDerm in New York City.
- [Caren Campbell, MD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist based in the Bay Area.
- [Ranella Hirsch, MD, FAAD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist based in Boston, MA.
- [Sheila Farhang, MD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist, double-fellowship trained cosmetic surgeon, and reconstructive Mohs micrographic surgeon based in Tucson, AZ.
- [Marnie Nussman, MD, FAAD](#), is a board-certified dermatologist specializing in non-invasive aesthetic rejuvenation in New York City.

How do I pick the best sunscreen for my skin type?

You'll want to keep an eye out for certain key phrases on the label. Dealing with **sensitive skin**? Dermatologist Marnie Nussbaum, MD, recommends fragrance-free and hypoallergenic formulas. She also prefers mineral sunscreens made with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide for sensitive skin because they're less likely to cause irritation. **Acne** happens to the best of us, but your best path forward is to use an oil-free and non-comedogenic sunscreen that won't congest your pores.

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