

June 5, 2025

Brittany Nims

The best sunscreens of 2026, according to dermatologists

Quick Overview



[EltaMD UV Clear Face Sunscreen SPF 46](#)

[\\$49](#)

[See at EltaMD](#)



Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch SPF 70

[4.8913.32](#)

[See at Amazon](#)



[La Roche-Posay Anthelios Mineral Ultra-Light Sunscreen SPF 50](#)

[39.9942.99](#)

[See at Amazon](#)



[Neutrogena Beach Defense Spray Sunscreen SPF 70](#)

[\\$9.88](#)

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[Babo Botanicals Sheer Zinc Continuous Sunscreen Spray SPF 30](#)

[13.3821.5](#)

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Sunscreen is non-negotiable, especially if you're building an [anti-aging skin care routine](#). After years of reporting on beauty and interviewing dozens of dermatologists, I can confidently say that sunscreen is single-handedly the most important product in your beauty arsenal to protect against skin cancers, wrinkles, brown spots, textured skin and other types of skin damage that are caused by UV light. But even with all of this damning knowledge at our fingertips, many of us still don't think to wear sunscreen 365 days a year. But now is the time to start, with many of our top picks on sale, right now.

Unfortunately for those folks, the data is pretty clear as for how often you should really be wearing sunscreen. "I wear it every day, 365 days a year,"

said [Dr. Gary Goldenberg](#), assistant professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. "Even in winter, you still get some UV that can cause skin damage.

Sunscreen should be part of your skin care routine each and every morning, no matter the weather or time of year. What type of sunscreen you reach for, however, depends on loads of factors that will differ for everyone, since there's no one-size-fits-all for sun protection. Considerations like your age and skin type, the activities you'll be doing, active ingredients and even what type of applicator is easiest for you to remember to use daily — all of these factors will determine just exactly which type of sunscreen is best for you. The most important thing is that you're actually wearing it. "I'm happy if people just find a sunscreen that they enjoy to use and use it regularly," said Dr. Ashley Magovern of [Manhattan Dermatology](#) and Medical Advisor for [Dermstore](#).

In all, we spoke with eight dermatologists and skin care experts across the industry to get the scoop on all things sunscreen, going so far as to ask what products they themselves use each and every day. They explained everything from the keywords to scan for on the bottle when you're shopping for a new sunscreen (and those to overlook), to the difference between mineral and chemical formulas (and who would benefit from each type). It's a lot to unpack, so we'll dive right into the world of sunscreen and the best ones that our experts recommend.

Update: May 4, 2026: We checked all product prices and availability, and spoke with two additional experts. We added new reporting and new recommendations from those experts, but our number one pick for the best sunscreen remains unchanged. Best overall sunscreen

SPF: Every dermatologist we spoke with recommended using SPF 30 or higher for optimal protection, but it doesn't hurt to opt for a sunscreen with higher SPF since most people aren't applying enough to begin with. "Starting with a higher SPF to begin with acts like an insurance policy to give you the best level of protection possible," according to Dr. Joshua Zeichner of [Zeichner Dermatology](#) in New York City.

Broad spectrum: Broad spectrum means the sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB rays, giving you a full spectrum of protection in the sun. Dermatologists recommend looking for sunscreens that include these keywords for the highest level of protection.

Type of applicator: Sunscreens come with all types of applications, from lotions and sprays, to sticks and gels. Most dermatologists agree that the best type of sunscreen applicator is the one you'll actually use. "I'm a big believer in using what you like," said Dr. Elle de Moll of [Dermatology Physicians of Connecticut](#). "I feel like patients hate to tell me that they use spray sunscreen, but honestly — you're way more likely to use what you like — and that counts for a whole lot more."

Water resistance: Dermatologists recommend looking for sunscreens that are water resistance, as this ensures it remains effective when you're sweating or swimming. Just don't let the phrase "water resistant" make you think it doesn't need reapplying. You should always reapply sunscreen after toweling off, said Dr. King.

Mineral or chemical: Mineral sunscreens are what's called a "physical blocker" of the sun's rays, and work by physically blocking UV light. They're almost always made up of at least one of two ingredients: zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Mineral sunscreens are preferable for babies, kids, and those with sensitive skin or acne as they're non-comedogenic (i.e. non pore-clogging) and are less likely to cause skin irritation. Chemical sunscreens are "chemical blockers," which work by absorbing UV rays by using ingredients such as avobenzone, octinoxate and octisalate. Dermatologist agree that both forms — physical and chemical blockers — are effective at preventing sunburn. For those who are concerned about using chemicals, experts recommend sticking to mineral sunscreens.

Popular active ingredients

Zinc oxide: physical blocker, works by blocking UV rays, preferable for kids, babies and those with sensitive skin

Titanium dioxide: physical blocker, works by blocking UV rays, preferable for kids, babies and those with sensitive skin

Avobenzone: chemical blocker, works by absorbing UV rays

Octinoxate: chemical blocker, works by absorbing UV rays

Octisalate: chemical blocker, works by absorbing UV rays

How we chose

We spoke to several dermatologists and skin care experts about the sunscreens they use and recommend to their clients and patients, as well as what they recommend consumers look for when shopping for a bottle of sunscreen.

What keywords should you look for when picking one up at the drugstore? What ingredients should you consider? What's the big deal about mineral sunscreens? What's the difference between UVA and UVB and does it really matter in a sunscreen? These were the types of questions we put to our experts to find out which sunscreens are worth it and which ones aren't.

We then used their recommendations, as well as their guidance on shopping for sunscreens, to curate this list of top choices, narrowed down by specific consumer needs.

FAQsWhat is a good SPF level for sunscreen?

Every dermatologist we spoke with recommended using an SPF of 30 or higher for optimal protection, but it doesn't hurt to opt for a sunscreen with higher SPF since most people aren't applying enough to begin with. "Starting with a higher SPF to begin with acts like an insurance policy to give you the best level of protection possible," Dr. Zeichner said.How often should you apply sunscreen?

The general rule of thumb is to reapply every two hours, or more frequently if you're swimming or sweating. Don't let marketing phrases like "water resistant" or "all-day protection" fool you into thinking you

don't need to reapply. Always reapply after getting out of water. Is there such a thing as a sunscreen that allows you to tan?

While there might be some SPF products on the market that claim they allow you to tan, experts caution using them. "Any sunscreen which allows you to tan is not effectively protecting the skin," Dr. King said. That's because UV is required for you to tan, because a tan is your body's response to DNA damage. "When the UV radiation hits your skin, it triggers your melanocytes to pump out pigment, trying to create a protective umbrella over the nucleus of your cell," Dr. Price said. "When used properly, you should not tan if you're using sunscreen." Instead, our experts recommend using a gradual tanning lotion for a bronzing effect if you want to achieve a tan. Does sunscreen expire?

Yes, and the effectiveness of ingredients could degrade over time leading to less sun protection. "I usually say that if the next summer comes around and you still have some [sunscreen], you probably aren't using enough and it's probably time to restock on some fresh bottles," Dr. Magovern said. What is the difference between sunscreen and sunblock?

These days they're the same thing, but they used to refer to the difference in chemical vs. physical products. "In the old days, sunscreen used to refer to the chemical products and sunblocks referred to the physical/mineral products, however, now they seem to be used interchangeably," Dr. Magovern said.

Meet our experts

Dr. Leanne King, cosmetic scientist and skin researcher, and founder at [Beauty Favours](#)

Dr. Meredith Price, dermatologist at [Grosse Pointe Dermatology](#) in Michigan

Dr. Joshua Zeichner, dermatologist at [Zeichner Dermatology](#) in New York City

Dr. Elle de Moll, dermatologist at [Dermatology Physicians of Connecticut](#)

Dr. Ashley Magovern, dermatologist at [Manhattan Dermatology](#)



EltaMD

[EltaMD UV Clear Face Sunscreen SPF 46](#)

[Best overall sunscreen \(for face\)](#)

[\\$49](#)

SPF: 46 / **Broad spectrum:** Broad spectrum / **Type of applicator:** Lotion /
Water resistance: No / **Mineral or chemical:** Both / **Active ingredients:**
Zinc oxide, Octinoxate

Multiple experts we spoke with recommend EltaMD UV Clear for just about anyone, even those with oily, acne-prone skin because of its lightweight, oil-free formula that won't clog pores. It's formulated with niacinamide, a known ingredient for soothing irritated, red skin and restoring suppleness.

Plus, because it's formulated with both chemical and mineral ingredients, it provides strong UVA and UVB broad spectrum protection. It's

lightweight formula goes on non-greasy and can easily be worn under makeup or on its own.

[\\$49 at EltaMD](#)



Neutrogena

[Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch SPF 70](#)

[Best overall sunscreen \(for body\)](#)

[4.8913.32Save 8](#)

SPF: 70 / **Broad spectrum:** Yes / **Type of applicator:** Lotion / **Water resistance:** Yes / **Mineral or chemical:** Chemical / **Active ingredients:** Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene, Oxybenzone

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends an SPF of at least 30, but most experts like Dr. Meredith Price, dermatologist at [Grosse Pointe Dermatology](#) in Michigan, strongly suggest using a higher SPF than that. "One of the most common errors people make when using sunscreen is that they don't put on enough of the product to achieve the

SPF on the label," Price said. "If you're using a higher SPF to start with, it gives you a little grace in that way.

Most people don't apply the 1.5 ounces of sunblock that's required for most adults to achieve adequate sun protection, so a high SPF option can act "like an insurance policy to give you the best level of protection possible," said Dr. Joshua Zeichner of [Zeichner Dermatology](#) in New York City

Neutrogena's Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch Sunscreen SPF 70 "has been clinically tested and shown to give better sunburn protection compared to sunscreens with lower SPFs," Zeichner continued. It's lightweight, fast-absorbing and has a non-greasy, matte finish that can be used all over the body. It's also extremely accessible and affordable and can be found at most major retailers, from Amazon and Walmart to your corner Walgreens.

[\\$4.89 at Amazon](#)

Dr. [Gary Goldenberg](#), assistant professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine in New York

Dr. Yoram Harth, dermatologist and Medical Director of [MDacne](#)

[Kerry Spindler](#), beauty expert and melanoma survivor

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La Roche-Posay

[La Roche-Posay Anthelios Mineral Ultra-Light Sunscreen SPF 50](#)

[Best mineral sunscreen](#)

[39.9942.99Save 3](#)

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Fluid lotion / Water resistance: No / Mineral or chemical: Mineral / Active ingredients: Titanium dioxide, Zinc oxide

Whether you're looking for a sunscreen that's kid and baby safe, or want something free of chemicals for your sensitive skin, mineral sunscreens are the way to go. Dr. Magovern recommends La Roche-Posay Anthelios Mineral Ultra-Light Sunscreen because it includes both zinc oxide and titanium dioxide as active ingredients.

As for whether chemical or mineral sunscreens are better, experts say it can be a matter of personal preference and your skin's unique needs.

"Personally, I prefer mineral-based sunscreen because I like the idea of

less absorption of chemicals," Dr. Magovern said. "I'm happy if people just find a sunscreen that they enjoy to use and use it regularly."

[\\$39.99 at Amazon](#)



Neutrogena

[Neutrogena Beach Defense Spray Sunscreen SPF 70](#)

[Best spray sunscreen](#)

[\\$9.88](#)

SPF: 70 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Spray / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene

Sometimes spray sunscreen is the most convenient option, especially if you're in a hurry and need something that's easy to apply. Dr. Elle de Moll of [Dermatology Physicians of Connecticut](#) said she herself uses Neutrogena Beach Defense Spray Sunscreen when she's in a hurry and needs something that's quick and easy.

"I'm a big believer in using what you like! I feel like patients hate to tell me that they use spray sunscreen, but honestly — you're way more likely to use what you like — and that counts for a whole lot more," she said.

That said, when using a spray sunscreen you have to be mindful of the amount you're applying, Dr. Price said. "With a spray you cannot do that light misting thing! You have to spray on a visible amount, then rub it in, in order to achieve the SPF on the label."

[\\$9.88 at Amazon](#)



Babo Botanicals

[Babo Botanicals Sheer Zinc Continuous Sunscreen Spray SPF 30](#)

[Best mineral spray sunscreen](#)

[13.3821.5Save 9](#)

SPF: 30 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Spray / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Mineral / Active ingredients: Zinc oxide

For kids and babies, you'll want to reach for a mineral spray sunscreen like Babo Botanicals Sheer Zinc Continuous Sunscreen Spray, which is made with zinc oxide.

All of the experts we spoke with recommended reaching for mineral sunscreens for children because they're made with physical sun blockers like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, two ingredients that are less likely to cause skin irritation in little ones.

In general, sunscreen is recommended for all children ages six months and older; children younger than six months should avoid direct sun exposure.

[\\$13.38 at Amazon](#)



La Roche-Posay

[La Roche-Posay Anthelios Kids Gentle Lotion Sunscreen SPF 50](#)

[Best sunscreen for kids](#)

[33.99](#)

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Lotion / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene

Dr. Leanne King, cosmetic scientist and skin researcher, recommends La Roche Posay's Anthelios Dermo-Pediatrics Baby Lotion SPF 50 — but unfortunately you cannot find that specific product in the U.S. Instead, you can find La Roche-Posay's Anthelios Kids Gentle Lotion Sunscreen SPF 50, which is close. It's water resistant for up to 80 minutes and offers high UVA and UVB protection. It's also octinoxate- and oxybenzone-free, oil free, but because it's formulated with glycerin it glides on easily and provides soothing protection while being oil-free and non-comedogenic.

[\\$33.99 at Amazon](#)



Babo Botanicals

[Babo Botanicals Sensitive Mineral Sunscreen Stick SPF 50](#)
[Best sunscreen stick for kids and babies](#)
[14.5](#)

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Stick / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Mineral / Active ingredients: Zinc oxide

For little ones, a sunscreen stick might be easier to apply than sunscreen lotion or spray. Dr. de Moll uses Babo Botanicals Sensitive Mineral Sunscreen Stick on her own kids. "My toddler loves to get involved using it."

Experts recommend mineral sunscreens for use on kids as the ingredients are less likely to cause irritation to sensitive skin. "Not all sunscreens that are advertised for kids are mineral sunscreen, so this is something to pay particular attention to," Dr. de Moll said.

[\\$14.5 at Amazon](#)



Dermstore

[EltaMD UV AOX Elements Broad-Spectrum SPF 50](#)

[Best \(less expensive\) tinted face sunscreen](#)

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Tinted lotion / Water resistance: No / Mineral or chemical: Mineral / Active ingredients: Zinc oxide, Titanium dioxide

This is another tinted sunscreen recommendation by Dr. Magovern, but this one will make a smaller dent in your wallet. EltaMD UV AOX Elements Broad-Spectrum can triple as sunscreen, skin care and a skin tint, which makes it a particularly smart choice for those who want an easy skin care routine that doesn't require much thought or effort. Plus, it's an easy way to ensure you wear sunscreen each and every day.

"I recommend wearing sunscreen to your face and neck daily as part of your daily routine to help prevent premature aging and skin cancers on the face," Dr. Magovern said. "If you are going to be in direct sun and have a chance of sunburn, I recommend applying it to all exposed areas as well."

[\\$46 at Amazon](#)



Revision Skincare

[Revision Skincare Intellishade Anti-Aging Tinted Moisturizer SPF 45](#)
[Best sunscreen for wrinkles](#)

[89](#)

SPF: 45 / **Broad spectrum:** Yes / **Type of applicator:** Tinted lotion / **Water resistance:** No / **Mineral or chemical:** Both / **Active ingredients:** Zinc oxide, Titanium dioxide, Octinoxate, Octisalate, peptides, Vitamin C

Not all sunscreens are created equally, especially if you have wrinkles. "Someone with more mature skin may choose a sunscreen with anti-aging ingredients built in," said Dr. Price, who recommends Revision Skincare's Intellishade SPF moisturizers specifically because its formula includes THD ascorbate — i.e. the most stable form of Vitamin C — and peptides.

If you know anything about Vitamin C, you know that it's a potent and powerful antioxidant that brightens and revitalizes the skin. It aids in protecting the skin from environmental damage (in this case, sun damage!) brightens skin texture and promotes collagen production. Peptides are amino acids that support proteins in the skin like collagen and elastin, which are needed for firmness and elasticity. The two work together in this SPF moisturizer to protect the skin while working hard to turn over a younger, more youthful-looking complexion.

[\\$89 at Amazon](#)



Eucerin

[Eucerin Clear Skin Sunscreen SPF 50](#)

[Best sunscreen for oily, acne-prone skin](#)

[14.3917.99Save 4](#)

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Lotion / Water resistance: No / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene

If oily skin is your main concern, beauty expert and melanoma survivor [Kerry Spindler](#) offers a few pointers to follow. "Look for sunscreens that have a matte finish to help control excess shine throughout the day," she said. "Additionally, sunscreens with ingredients like silica or dimethicone can help to mattify the skin and control oil production."

Dr. de Moll recommends Eucerin Clear Skin Sunscreen to many of her acne patients for this very reason. It contains oil-absorbing minerals like silica and silica dimethyl silylate which work to smooth the skin while regulating oil and sebum on the surface.

[\\$14.39 at Amazon](#)



ISDIN

[Isdin Eryfotona Actinica Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50+](#)

[Best sunscreen for sun-damaged skin](#)

[\\$54.87](#) Save 18

SPF: 50 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Lotion / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Mineral / Active ingredients: Zinc oxide

This mineral sunscreen is amped up with 11% zinc oxide for superior protection and it's packed with sun damage-healing ingredients to help protect against further damage and repair skin from the inside out.

The name may be a mouthful, but Dr. Goldenberg swears by this one. He especially recommends it for patients who have known sun damage. Isdin's Eryfotona Actinica is lightweight, won't leave your skin feeling greasy and has UVA/UVB protection. It also has DNA repairsomes and vitamin E to help fight UVA-induced skin damage.

[\\$54.8 at Amazon](#)



Aveeno

[Aveeno Protect + Hydrate Moisturizing Face Sunscreen](#)

[Best sunscreen for dry skin](#)

[12.3415.61Save 4](#)

SPF: 60 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Lotion / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene

This high-SPF, oil-free sunscreen won't clog pores, and it contains oatmeal — a nourishing ingredient — that helps repair and moisturize the skin's outer layer.

Zeichner likes Aveeno's Protect + Hydrate sunscreen for a few reasons. "Besides offering broad spectrum sun protection, it delivers a little oatmeal to repair and hydrate the outer skin layer," he says. "We know that UV light can disrupt the outer skin layer, leading to dryness and irritation." The sunscreen is fast-absorbing, oil-free and

noncomedogenic, so it won't clog your pores. It's also water-resistant for up to 80 minutes.

[\\$12.34 at Amazon](#)



ELEMIS

[ELEMIS Pro-Collagen Marine Cream SPF 30](#)

[Best sunscreen for aging, mature skin](#)

[108.75145Save 36](#)

SPF: 30 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Cream / Water resistance: No / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Octinoxate, Octocrylene

In our guide to [building a skin care routine in your 60s](#), experts told us that aging skin becomes dry and dehydrated, which is why most anti-aging products contain moisture-boosting ingredients. Dr. Magovern said the same is true when it comes to buying sunscreens for mature skin.

"For aging, mature skin, I recommend SPF's that are formulated with ingredients that hydrate and plump the skin," she said. "ELEMIS Pro-Collagen Marine Cream SPF 30 is a great option, as it not only has UV protection, but it also boosts the skin's hydration levels with antioxidant-rich botanical and marine extracts."

This particular SPF cream is made with marine collagen that reduces the look of fine lines and wrinkles, and helps to improve the look of firmness and elasticity.

[\\$108.75 at Amazon](#)

Amazon

[COOLA Organic Liplux Lip Balm with SPF 30](#)

[Best sunscreen for your lips](#)

[\\$15](#)

SPF: 30 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Lip balm / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Octisalate, Octocrylene

Dermatologists agree that sunscreen for less obvious areas — like the lips and scalp — is a crucial part of overall suncare protection. Dr. de Moll reaches Coola's Liplux Lip Balm for her lips when she wants extra protection.

Dr. Chacon advises thinking of lip and scalp protection as an addition to your sun protection routine. "These products should not replace sunscreen but rather be used in conjunction with it for comprehensive sun protection," she said.

Coola's Liplux Lip Balm is made with hydrating ingredients like carnauba wax and raspberry butter to give lips a natural gloss, increased suppleness and to tackle wrinkles.

[\\$15 at Amazon](#)

Sun Bum

[Sun Bum Scalp and Hair Mist Sunscreen SPF 30](#)

[Best sunscreen for your scalp](#)

[17.49](#)

SPF: 30 / Broad spectrum: Yes / Type of applicator: Scalp mist / Water resistance: Yes / Mineral or chemical: Chemical / Active ingredients: Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate, Octocrylene

Dr. Magovern is also a fan of SPF products for the lips and scalp. "We also see a lot of skin cancer on the scalp, in particular in the hairline and part, where cumulative sun damage occurs," Magovern said.

Using a minimum SPF 30 product for the scalp and hairline, such as Sun Bum's Scalp and Hair Mist Sunscreen can boost your overall sun care protection. It's a lightweight, fast-drying hair mist that won't leave your hair weighted down or greasy. It's even non-comedogenic and lightweight enough to spritz on your face for an added boost of protection, too.

[\\$17.49 at Amazon](#)

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