**July is UV Safety Month**

[This Photo](http://www.clearyourheart.net/2012/08/i-sunglasses.html) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

July is designated as [Ultraviolet Safety Month](https://voice.ons.org/stories/raise-awareness-in-july-for-ultraviolet-safety-and-skin-cancer-risk#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20Health,harmful%20effects%20of%20UV%20rays.), during which the goal is to spread awareness about the importance of protecting skin and eyes from the harmful effects of UV rays. [Some of the advice](https://www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/education/UV_Safety_Awareness_Month.asp) promoted includes covering up with a hat and sleeves to prevent overexposure, staying in the shade, and using a proper amount of effective sunscreen.

**6 Steps for Choosing a Clean and Safe Sunscreen**

**Read the Label Before Choosing Your Sunscreen**

Look for sunscreen that is labeled as broad-spectrum and has at least an SPF of 30.

**Learn the Pros and Cons of Mineral and Chemical Sunscreens**

Mineral sunscreens contain [zinc oxide](https://www.everydayhealth.com/drugs/zinc-oxide-topical) alone or in combination with titanium dioxide. They form a protective seal over the surface of the skin and protect the skin by reflecting away UV light. They tend to be chalkier and leave the skin with a white tinge. Chemical sunscreens contain compounds that absorb UV light and prevent it from penetrating into the skin. They absorb fully into the skin but may cause irritation in people with sensitive skin.

**Know the Difference Between Oxybenzone and Avobenzone**

Oxybenzone is a frequently used, inexpensive active ingredient found in some sunscreens. While it helps achieve high SPF ratings, it is also widely known as being one of the most irritating raw ingredients to work with, as opposed to the alternative, much more skin-compatible, and noncontroversial avobenzone, which is essential for getting a broad-spectrum clean chemical sunscreen. Oxybenzone has been on the ‘no list’ since day one, but we believe that clean chemical options are critical to mass consumer adoption of SPF and the eradication of the skin cancer epidemic.

**Why Broad Spectrum Matters When Picking a Sunblock**

Broad-spectrum sunscreen protects against both UVA — which causes wrinkles — and UVB rays — which causes sunburn and skin cancer, [according to the FDA](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/sunscreen-how-help-protect-your-skin-sun).

**Check for Your Sunscreen’s Water Resistance**

Water-resistant sunscreens are good because the rule of thumb is that we tell people to reapply every two hours. And a lot of people do not realize that they’re sweating off their sunscreen throughout the day, especially when it’s humid out, so water resistant sunscreens give people that extra protection even if they’re not in actual water.

**Keep the Vitamin D Factor in Mind**

Eat foods enriched and fortified with vitamin D, including egg yolks, fatty fish such as mackerel and salmon, some cheeses, and beef liver instead of being in the sun.

