

75% of Sunscreens are Toxic: What to do Instead

by Dr. Josh Axe

More than 2 million Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer every year. And even though more and more people are using sunscreen each year, the incidence of skin cancer continues to climb worldwide. It's that time of year where we all start enjoying the weather outside, but did you know that 4 different studies conducted in the 1990's indicated a higher risk of malignant melanoma among individuals who used the most sunscreen!

Several years ago when I started revealing the dangers of sunscreen many people were surprised. But over the past 5 years more research is starting to come out about the dangers of sunscreen.

Now I'm not telling you never to wear sunscreen! Sometimes, you should wear sunscreen (more on that later). But first, I want to share with you the benefits of not wearing sunscreen for a portion of the day and also let you know what brands are toxic-free and safe for you and your family, and where you can get them.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) just published their 2014 guide to safe sunscreens. They reviewed over 2000 sunscreens and over 257 brands. They found more than 75% of the sunscreens contained toxic chemicals that can increase your risk of cancer and other health issues.

The Dangers of Conventional Sunscreens According to research from the EWG: *Our review...shows that some sunscreen ingredients absorb into the blood, and some have toxic effects. Some release skin-damaging free radicals in sunlight, some act like estrogen and disrupt hormones, and several can cause allergic reactions and skin irritation. The FDA has not established rigorous safety standards for sunscreen ingredients.* Sunscreens haven't been regulated since 1978 in the USA, and the SPF factor only tells you how effective a sunscreen is against UVB rays which cause sunburn.

A recent study published in Environmental Science Technology has also shown the common sunscreen ingredients oxybenzone, methoxycinnamate, and PABA are estrogenic chemicals linked to cancer. That's right, I read the labels on not only my food products, but on anything I'm putting on or near my body, and you should too. If your sunscreen contains any of these chemicals I'd throw it away right now!

List of Unsafe, Toxic Chemicals in Sunscreen:

Para amino benzoic acid	Homosalate
Octyl salicyclate	Menthyl anthranilate
Oxybenzone	Octocrylene
Cinoxate	Methoxycinnamate
Dioxybenzone	Parabens
Phenylbenzimidazole	

The Sun Doesn't Cause Cancer In truth, the sun is essential for your health. Think about it. Without the sun, most plants couldn't grow and we would perish from a lack of Vitamin D3. Of course, you can have too much of a good thing. I don't recommend letting your skin burn, and this is a common point people miss. Getting a moderate amount of sunshine daily can actually help decrease your risk of certain types of cancers.

The Sun is your best source of Vitamin D3. When you get approximately 20 minutes of direct sunlight, your body naturally generates enough Vitamin D3 (Calciferol), and your body also knows the right

amount to generate without overdose. Vitamin D3 has been one of the most researched nutrients over the past 5 years and it has been shown to naturally help boost the immune system, help fight cancer and improve mood.

There are two types of sunscreens: non-mineral and mineral. And some that combine both. Non-mineral sunscreens penetrate the skin, are potentially disruptive to hormones, are allergenic, and like I mentioned earlier, can release free radicals when they break down. Oxybenzone is the most common ingredient found in sunscreens. Scientists recommend not using sunscreens containing oxybenzone on children because of this hormone disruption.

Mineral sunscreens are ones containing zinc, or titanium. These do not breakdown in sunlight, are not usually absorbed (so do not disrupt the body's hormones), are not allergenic and are more effective at blocking UVA rays than non-minerals. These sunscreens are a good choice for children and according to EWG have the best safety profiles of the choices in the United States.

What I Use: Kiss My Face SPF 30

What Natural Sunscreens to Buy

The best sunscreen is a hat and a shirt. No chemicals for the skin to absorb, no questions about whether the product works and no bogus claims like "sunblock." (No conventional product blocks out all rays. Which is why the FDA is trying to ban the term.)

When buying sunscreen I'd first check the EWG database. Here are my top 3 recommended brands of the top natural sunscreens:

1. Kiss My Face SPF 30
2. 100% Pure Hydration Organic Pomegranate
3. Aubrey Organics SPF 30 Children's Unscented Sensitive Skin

These healthier sunscreens contain Titanium Dioxide and Zinc Oxide as a more natural form of sunblock. However even these ingredients aren't flawless as you'll see in the EWG ratings system. Foods and Supplements that Protect Your Skin According to the American Cancer Society, oxidative damage can increase your cancer risk, so I recommend eating a diet high in certain foods which can potentially decrease your risk.

List of the best foods and supplements to protect your skin:

Resveratrol (red wine, blueberries and red grapes)
Omega-3 fatty acids (salmon and fish oil)
Astaxanthin (salmon and fish oil)
Catechins (green and white tea)
Vitamin E (pumpkin seeds, almonds, and asparagus)
Beta-carotene (carrots and red bell peppers)

Actions Steps

1. Get 20+ minutes of sunshine daily
2. Cover up with light clothing before you get burnt
3. Wear natural sunscreen if you're going to stay out for a long period of time
4. Eat a diet high in anti-oxidants to protect your skin
5. If you get burnt, use a mixture of aloe, coconut oil and vitamin E on your skin