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## The Best Mineral Sunscreens for All Skin Types

Mineral sunscreens sit on top of your skin and reflect UV rays. They're especially great for sensitive and acne-prone skin



Written By **Medea Giordano**

Edited By **Madeline Diamond**

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### Featured in this article



**Seaweed Bath Co.**

Smooth & Protect Invisible Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50  
~~\$28~~ \$23

[Shop now](#) [Read more](#)



**EltaMD**

UV Pure Sunscreen SPF 47  
**\$43**

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**EltaMD**

UV Physical Tinted Sunscreen SPF 41  
**\$48**

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You probably know you should wear sunscreen (**[no matter the weather](#)**), but how do you find the one that works best for your skin type?

While chemical sunscreens work by absorbing into your skin, their ingredients, such as oxybenzone or avobenzone, can be irritating to sensitive skin. Mineral sunscreens, on the other hand, sit on the surface and reflect UV rays. Their active ingredients, zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, tend to be better suited for sensitive skin, whether you're acne-prone or have other skin conditions such as eczema or rosacea. Mineral

sunscreens are widely considered reef-safe, while chemical sunscreens are not—though not all mineral recipes are [EcoCert Cosmos Organic](#)

[Certified and EWG Verified](#)

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check out our other sunscreen guides as well, including the [best everyday picks](#) and [tinted options](#).

## Anti-inflammatory formula



**SEAWEED BATH CO.**

### Smooth & Protect Invisible Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50

**\$23 AT AMAZON**

~~\$28~~ Save \$5

[Seaweed Bath Co.'s Invisible Mineral SPF 50](#) offers an ingredient list that's gentle enough for all skin types, including sensitive and acne-prone skin, according to [Dr. Serena Mraz](#), a Vallejo, Calif.-based dermatologist at Solano Dermatology and Associates. It's “packed with anti-inflammatory vitamins” that can decrease redness and irritation, she notes, as well as seaweed extract that [helps protect skin](#) from the sun's harmful effects. The sunscreen's gel consistency and sheer finish make it easy to blend and comfortable to wear.

## For ultra-sensitive skin



**ELTAMD****\$43 AT DERMSTORE****\$43 AT AMAZON****ELTAMD**

### UV Physical Tinted Sunscreen SPF 41

**\$48 AT DERMSTORE****\$48 AT AMAZON**

Most of the mineral sunscreens on this list are safe for sensitive skin, but [EltaMD's UV Pure SPF 47](#) is particularly worth considering for anyone who has experienced irritation from other sunscreens, says [Dr. Nazanin Saedi](#), a Philadelphia-based dermatologist at Dermatology Associates of Plymouth Meeting. This is in part because the formula is water-based, hypoallergenic and free of fragrances and dyes. Plus, the addition of vitamin C could “help reduce free radical damage throughout the day.”

The brand's [UV Physical SPF 41](#) is another gentle option for rosacea and acne-prone skin, according to [Dr. Ryan Turner](#), a New York City-based dermatologist and founder of Turner Dermatology. The gentle formula absorbs well and has a slight tint to offset a potential white cast.

## Great for kids

Blue Lizard

**BLUE LIZARD**

## Sensitive Mineral Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50+

**\$14 AT ULTA****\$16 AT AMAZON**

[Blue Lizard's Sensitive Mineral SPF 50 Sunscreen](#) is a great mineral option for kids, according to Turner. He notes that the minimal ingredient list, which includes aloe vera and is free of fragrances, offers a lower irritation risk. That makes it great for eczema-prone skin as well. It has a thicker consistency than some other options on this list, which means it may leave a more noticeable white cast.

## Antioxidant protection

**LA ROCHE-POSAY**

## Anthelios Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50

**\$43 AT AMAZON**



**LA ROCHE-POSAY**

## Anthelios Mineral Tinted Sunscreen SPF 40

**\$40 AT AMAZON**

**\$43 AT ULTA**

La Roche-Posay is a dermatologist favorite across skincare categories. Its Anthelios line of sunscreens, available in [untinted](#) and [tinted mineral formulations](#), plus for kids, provide broad spectrum UVA and UVB protection. The formula also includes antioxidants to protect the skin from free radicals and can help reduce the appearance of sun damage. Turner recommends it especially for those who are prone to hyperpigmentation, because it protects against [visible light](#) that can worsen the skin condition.

## Mattifying formula



**SKINCEUTICALS**

## Sheer Physical UV Defense SPF 50

**\$45 AT SKINCEUTICALS**

**\$45 AT DERMSTORE**



#### SKINCEUTICALS

### Physical Fusion UV Defense SPF 50

**\$45 AT SKINCEUTICALS**

**\$45 AT DERMSTORE**

The [SkinCeuticals Sheer Physical UV Defense SPF 50](#) is “excellent for sensitive or post-procedure skin when you need reliable protection in a refined, non-chalky texture,” says [Dr. Joni Jefferson](#), the Morristown, N.J.-based founder and medical director of Zen Aesthetics Med Spa. Its matte finish makes it a great choice for oily skin. Jefferson also likes the brand’s tinted [Physical Fusion UV Defense](#), which she says “adapts to many skin tones,” providing a “subtle, even, ‘no-makeup’ finish.”

## Skin-enhancing pick



#### MD SOLARSCIENCES

### Mineral Tinted Crème SPF 30

**\$36 AT REVOLVE**

**\$36 AT MD SOLARSCIENCES**

The [MD SolarSciences Mineral Tinted Creme SPF 50](#) has a lightweight feel and a neutral tint that evens out the skin tone, says [Dr. Debbie Palmer](#), a Harrison, N.Y.-based dermatologist and co-founder of Dermatology Associates of New York. Offering broad spectrum protection against UVA and UVB rays, this mineral cream also includes vitamin C, green tea and pomegranate extract, which “protect against free radical damage,” she notes. It’s also water-resistant for up to 80 minutes.

## Luxe glowy finish



**ALASTIN SKINCARE**

### HydraTint Pro Mineral Broad Spectrum Sunscreen SPF 36

**\$84 AT ALASTIN SKINCARE**

**\$84 AT AMAZON**

With a hydrating feel that doesn’t add shine, [Alastin’s Hydratint SPF 36](#) is a good “replacement for a tinted moisturizer,” according to Saedi. Offering lightweight, broad spectrum protection, Hydratint “gives your skin just the right amount of coverage to even it out,” she says.

## Mineral foundation

**TOWER 28 BEAUTY**

### SunnyDays SPF 30 Tinted Sunscreen Foundation

**\$32 AT TOWER 28**

**\$32 AT SEPHORA**

The other tinted options on this list offer sheer or light color. Consider [Tower 28's SunnyDays Tinted SPF 30](#) if you want a light to medium buildable foundation that also protects against UVA and UVB rays. All the brand's formulas are made with sensitive skin in mind, and forgo pore-clogging ingredients and fragrances. This foundation received the [National Eczema Association's Seal of Acceptance](#).

## Powders for touch-ups

**COLORESCIENCE**

### Sunforgettable Total Protection Brush-On Sunscreen

**\$69 AT DERMSTORE**

**\$69 AT AMAZON**



**ISDIN**

## Mineral Brush Daily Protection Powder

**\$40 AT DERMSTORE**

**\$40 AT ISDIN**

Powder sunscreens are not generally recommended by the dermatologists we consulted to be used as your only form of sun protection. But since [the CDC recommends](#) reapplying sunscreen every two hours, brush-on formulas are ideal for reapplication throughout the day without disturbing makeup. Saedi likes the [Colorescience Sunforgettable Brush-On Sunscreen](#) with SPF 50, which is available in six shades to match skin tones.

For a translucent powder option, consider the [ISDIN Mineral Brush SPF 50](#), recommended by [Dr. Morayo Adisa](#), a Chicago-based dermatologist and the medical director of Dermatology Physicians Chicago. She notes that it helps control shine, which is a plus if you have oily skin.

## What's the difference between mineral and chemical sunscreens?

Sunscreen comes in two types: mineral and chemical. "Mineral sunscreens contain zinc and/or titanium oxide," explains [Dr. Lauren Penzi](#), a Long Island N.Y.-based dermatologist at MDCS Dermatology. "They sit on the surface of the skin and reflect UV rays." They are also sometimes referred to as "physical" sunscreens. Chemical sunscreens, on the other hand, contain chemical ingredients such as avobenzone or octocrylene "that absorb UV and convert it into heat," Penzi explains.

## Who are mineral sunscreens best for?

People with all skin types can use mineral sunscreen, but these formulas are especially great for kids, [people with sensitive skin](#), rosacea or eczema. They lack chemicals such as oxybenzone or avobenzone, making them "much less likely to cause irritation as compared to chemical sunscreens," according to Penzi. They're also less likely to [clog pores](#). For this same reason, she also recommends mineral sunscreen if you've recently had a cosmetic or surgical procedure.

While modern mineral sunscreens aren't as thick as they once were (see below), they can still leave a white cast on darker skin tones. Sheer formulas, such as the [Seaweed Bath Co.'s Invisible Sunscreen](#), can help prevent this, as they blend into the skin better. [Tinted mineral sunscreens](#) are also an option, because the use of pigment prevents a chalky appearance. You may also want to consider one of the chemical options included in our [everyday sunscreen guide](#).

# Are mineral sunscreens less comfortable to wear?

barrier between your skin and the sun’s rays. “In the past, mineral sunscreens were thick and goopy, but now formulas are much more elegant,” says Dr. Barney Kenet, a board-certified dermatologist in New York City and founder of [KenetMD Skincare](#).

## How much do I need to apply, and how often?

For many skincare products, less is more. That’s not true of sunscreen. Whether you’re using mineral or chemical, your face needs ¼ to ½ teaspoon. The dermatologists we asked to recommend spreading lines down two fingers to be sure you’re using enough. Your body needs an

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going outside,” to avoid rushing and to assure “all exposed body surface areas are appropriately covered” before exposing skin to the sun.

—Additional reporting by *Abbie Kozolchyk and Kelly Mickle*

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