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How protection has changed

A World War II airman and pharmacist developed the first commercial sunscreen in 1944, which was marketed as Coppertone Suntan Cream. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) developed guidelines for sun protection products, including SPF testing, in 1978, although its final rulings on labels remain unfinished.

"Originally, sunscreen only protected against UVB radiation, and that's what the SPF rating measures—how long you can stay in the sun

before your skin burns," says Zoe Diana Draelos, MD, a dermatologist in High Point, North Carolina. SPF 15 means that you can expose skin to sunlight 15 times longer without burning than if you were unprotected for a fair-skinned person that could be only 20 minutes).

Thanks to public education campaigns during the 1980s, people began to realize the importance of sun protection. SPF

numbers soared from the single digits (two, four, eight) to 50 and above.

"High SPF numbers can be misleading, though," says Joel Cohen, MD, chair of the American Society of Dermatological Surgery Patient Education Committee. "If your sunscreen has an SPF of 15, it blocks about 94 percent of UVB rays; SPF 30 blocks about 97 percent; and anything more than that doesn't block much more

than about 98 percent." He recommends that people with sensitive skin use SPF 30 or below, as greater sun-blocking ingredient concentrations may irritate your skin.

Growing awareness and marketing efforts have led to the inclusion of SPF in cosmetics, moisturizers, and hair products, which began to appear in the 1990s, according to Morison. "It's a positive move," he says. "Many people inadvertently apply sunscreen products on a daily basis that they probably would not otherwise use."

What to look for

Physical blocks: The best overall protection is a physical sunblock, such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which forms a barrier between your skin and UVA and UVB rays. Physical blocks formerly were white and thick, Cohen says, but newer formulations with microsized zinc oxide are more sheer. One to try: Der-

matone Sun Protection SPF 36 Lotion with Z-Cote (\$10).

Chemical blocks: Chemical-block sunscreens prevent sunlight from reacting with skin (the chemical is absorbed by skin and, in turn, absorbs UV rays, rendering

them less harmful). Chemical blocks are usually less visible, so they're often added to cosmetics. One example is Mexoryl, approved recently by the FDA. Find it in La Roche-Posay Anthelios SX (\$29). Helioplex, available in many Neutrogena sunscreens, works by making avobenzone, a chemical UVA-protecting sunscreen ingredient, more stable so that it lasts longer than traditional chemical blocks.

Broad-spectrum protection: Another essential factor is broad-spectrum protection, Cohen says. This means that the ingredients protect against as much light as possible—UVA and B. Look for labels marked "broad" or "wide spectrum" protection that specifically indicate zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, avobenzone, or helioplex/Mexoryl, such as those found on Aveeno Continuous Protection Sunblock Lotion SPF 30 (\$9).

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What works for you

When it comes to sun protection, "there are no drawbacks to layering sunscreens in body and hand lotions, moisturizers, and sunscreens," says Joel Schlessinger, MD, president of the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology and Aesthetic Surgery. Since experts emphasize the importance of using sunscreen year-round, opt for products, such as those below, that make protection easy to work into your daily routine.

Regardless of the types of sun protection products you choose, be sure to follow a few basic rules. "More people are using sunscreen than ever before, and more products contain sunscreen. However, there is still confusion about how much to use, when to put it on, and when to reapply," Begoun says. "Liberal application is essential every day, 365 days a year."

Remember your lips. Reapply SUN protection frequently.

Eyes: Traditional sunscreen may be too harsh for the sensitive skin around your eyes, Cohen says. Protect it with large sunglasses that block at least 99 percent of UVB and 95 percent of UVA rays. Also, consider protection specifically for this area, such as Clarins Sun Wrinkle Control Eye Contour Care SPF 30 (\$25). It contains light, undetectable mineral blocks that are melt-proof.

Hair: Products with UV protection not only help preserve color but also help protect a delicate scalp. Ocean Potion Shine and Shield broad spectrum UV (\$7) is equivalent to SPF 20 on skin. However, the best protection, Cohen says, is a hat with a brim that also protects your ears, face, and the back of your neck.

Body: Since legs and arms are prime locations for potential melanoma and age spots, you have even more reason to make sun-protective body lotions part of your daily routine, Cohen says. Try Lubriderm Daily Moisturizer Lotion SPF 15, which offers broad-spectrum protection (\$8).

Lips: Your mouth is often a forgotten zone. Sun protection here requires frequent reapplication because it wears off quickly. Try Decleor High Protective Sun Stick (\$20), which contains broad-spectrum SPF 25 protection, as well as moisturizing shea butter. ☺

Shopping info Products are available at drugstores or department stores, with the following exceptions:

Dermatone: 800-225-7546, www.dermatone.com
Ocean Potion: 800-715-3485, www.opotion.com

What's your favorite beauty innovation of the last 20 years? Send answers to Cooking Light contributing beauty editor **Maria Ricapito** at ask_beautywise@CookingLight.com, and we'll publish them on our Web site.



PORTRAIT: RANDY MAYOR; STYLING: MELANIE J. CLARKE; HAIR & MAKEUP: CELINE CHENOWETH