

**HATS ON** The 23-inch-round crocheted raffia Bianca hat shields faces. \$105, [store.shopmarysol.com](http://store.shopmarysol.com)



# LET THE SUN SHINE

BUT FIRST GET THE LOWDOWN ON THE SAFEST, MOST NATURAL WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM SUMMER'S RAYS

BY MEIRAV DEVASH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALESSANDRA OLANOW PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN OLSZEWSKI

Giver of life. Scorcher of skin. Since Sumerian times five millennia ago, humans have worshipped the sun—

and feared it. In a perfect world, we could soak up enough rays for a gorgeous glow without wrinkles or the risk of skin cancer, but that's not the world we live in. How do you protect yourself from wrinkles, sun spots, wicked burns, and most of all, skin cancer while still enjoying your time in the sun? No matter your skin tone or where you live, start by applying sunscreen religiously, even if you're planning to be outside only as long as it takes to walk to your car. The right product used correctly offers the best way to stay safe while enjoying summer's beaches, gardens, and hiking trails—even if you must forgo that seasonal glow.

"There's no such thing as a healthy tan. The color change actually indicates sun damage," says Dendy Engelman, dermatologist and director of dermatologic surgery

at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York. Still, she tries to give realistic advice to her patients. "You don't have to turn into a photophobic vampire that only comes out after 6 o'clock at night. You just need to be smart about sun exposure."

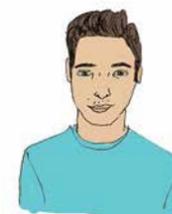
A daily coat of broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 is sufficient for most people. The number means you could stay in the sun 30 times as long as someone not wearing any sunscreen before you both start to burn. Still, you might be surprised to learn that the number on the bottle is a guesstimate—nobody applies a thick enough layer of sunscreen to match the SPF on the label. If you did, you'd look like a mime. "Divide the number on the bottle by two," Engelman

## Tips for Tones



### PALE/FRECKLES

With less of the pigment that gives skin color, you're more susceptible to carcinogenic rays. What little melanin you have clumps into freckles, or you burn. Stay covered and out of the sun.



### MEDIUM/OLIVE

If you're not blistering, you may think minimal protection is fine. "But if you've gotten noticeably darker, you're not using enough sunscreen," says dermatologist Dendy Engelman.



### DARK/BLACK

A study showed that 89 percent of basal-cell carcinomas (the most common skin cancer) on dark skin occur on the head or neck. Melanomas (the most lethal skin cancer) appear on palms, on soles of feet, and under nails.

recommends. “That’s probably the maximum you’re getting.”

Even cut in half, that’s pretty significant protection. As for how much sunscreen to apply, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends starting with 1 ounce, enough to fill a shot glass. But since bodies come in different sizes, New York City–based skin-care expert Michelle Yagoda suggests “putting on as much sunscreen as you would your favorite moisturizer.”

Keep in mind that some medications and beauty products make skin more photosensitive, including antibiotics like ampicillin, amoxicillin, and sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (Bactrim), as well as tretinoin (Retin-A) and glycolic acid skin-care products. That means your skin is more likely to burn, so take extra care and reapply every 2 hours.

It’s also important to understand that there are two basic types of sunscreen, and they are not equal. Chemical sunscreen works by diffusing UV rays, whereas physical formulas absorb them. “The energy from a chemical reaction can cause inflammation and redness in sensitive skin and those with allergies,” says Yagoda. “Physical sunscreen is simply a barrier that

prevents light from getting into skin.” The most effective UV-absorbing ingredient is mineral zinc oxide (titanium dioxide is a close second), which is anti-inflammatory to boot. Yagoda recommends formulas with a minimum of 7 percent zinc for the best coverage. Mineral-based physical sunscreens aren’t just safer. They’re also better for the environment. A recent study reported that oxybenzone, a popular UV filter found in chemical sunscreens, is killing coral reefs around the world.

A growing contingency of chemical-averse people feel strongly about natural protection, and the internet is teeming with mommy-blogger recipes for DIY sunscreen. Please don’t make your own, says Yagoda. “There are so many safe, effective, and inexpensive physical sunscreens on the market that have had their SPF validated and confirmed,” she argues. “I wouldn’t recommend one that has never been tested.” If you want a truly nontoxic physical blocker, nothing beats a creamy white layer of baby–butt paste (zinc oxide also soothes diaper rash)—but don’t expect it to look pretty.

Of course, zinc makes such a powerful barrier against searing UV rays that it blocks vitamin D

## What’s Your Summer Vibe?



## ACTIVE

If you’ve ever gotten sunscreen in your eyes, you understand why athletes sometimes forgo it. Brush-on micronized powder formulas, such as Colorescience Sunforgettable Loose Mineral Powder Brush SPF 50 (\$64/.21 oz.; [dermstore.com](http://dermstore.com)), won’t run into your eyes. Sunscreen sticks are ideal when playing hands-on sports because you don’t touch the product to apply it. But for a body in motion, the best sun protection is clothing with a UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) of 30-plus. Skin specialist Alan Dattner covers up in a wetsuit and balaclava when kayaking and swimming.

# YOUR SLATHER-ON, SPRAY-ON, ROLL-ON SHIELD

Finding a sunscreen that is effective, won’t harm reefs and other marine life, and won’t leave you looking like Casper can feel daunting. Here are five you’ll actually want to wear.



**EIR Surf Mud Pro Stick SPF 50** is made with zinc oxide and organic coconut oil and cocoa powder. The creamy, waterproof stick glides across your face, and its tube is compostable. \$30/1.5 oz.; [rodales.com](http://rodales.com)



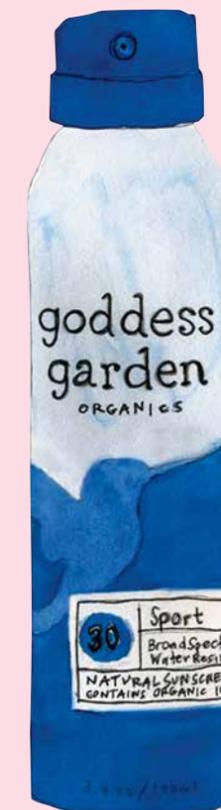
**Suntegrity Tinted Moisturizer + Face Primer BB Cream SPF 30** preps like primer, perfects like a tinted moisturizer, protects with SPF 30, and fights the signs of aging with antioxidants. \$45/1.7 oz.; [rodales.com](http://rodales.com)



**Kabana Green Screen Organic Sunscreen SPF 31**, with zinc oxide, is nonirritating and FDA-approved for babies under 6 months old. Plus, the packaging is recyclable. \$18/4 oz.; [kabanaskincare.com](http://kabanaskincare.com)



**Mayron’s Goods Sun Stuff SPF 30** looks like deodorant, but it’s a zinc-based sun shield for face and body. Jojoba, coconut, and avocado oils glide on clear with a subtle scent. \$24/.95 oz.; [rodales.com](http://rodales.com)



**Goddess Garden Organics Sport Natural Sunscreen Continuous Spray SPF 30**, with organic aloe, safflower, and sunflower seed oils, leaves a temporary tint to signal missed spots. \$16/3.4 oz.; [goddessgarden.com](http://goddessgarden.com)

absorption, too. If your doctor says your vitamin D levels are low, you're not alone—41 percent of Americans are deficient in the nutrient. But lying poolside isn't the way to fix the imbalance. The season, time of day, cloud cover, and your skin tone all factor into the amount of time you need in the sun to kick up vitamin D levels. Aside from all that, though, the range, according to the National Institutes of Health, is only between 5 and 30 minutes a couple of times a week. That can mean walking to work or running errands once in a while without sunscreen. **Yagoda goes one step further, rotating the body parts she exposes: her face on one occasion, her arms on another, her chest the next, and so forth.** "My body is

**able to get the vitamin D it needs without exposing all of my skin to regular, unprotected, or extreme risk," she says.**

Some skin conditions, however, actually benefit from a bit of sun exposure. Though the science isn't as clear on how well sunlight treats acne and eczema, UV light improves psoriasis by suppressing inflammation, says holistic dermatologist Alan Dattner, author of *Radiant Skin from the Inside Out*. That's just more evidence that the best way to determine how much sun to get is to consult your dermatologist. ♣

*Meirav Devash is a New York-based writer. This is her first story for Rodale's Organic Life.*



## CHILL

Despite new Swedish findings that sunbathers have a longer life expectancy than sun-avoiders, those rays still elevate skin cancer risk. To track exactly how much damage is done, skin-care company La Roche-Posay will debut a patch later this year that adheres to skin to monitor exposure. (Take a smartphone pic of the patch, upload it to the app, and get your answer immediately.) A good rule, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation, is to apply SPF of 30-plus for extended outdoor time and stay in shade between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M., when the sun is brightest. Cover bare parts, scalp included. "It's a hard area to check," says Engelman, who notes that if you have a cancer lesion there, it often goes unnoticed until it's big or symptomatic.

## OOPS, YOU DID IT AGAIN

Burned? Lessen pain with a tincture made from an inflammatory like turmeric or the herb *Arnica montana*. Then do damage control.



Topical vitamin C, says Engelman, "helps turn around signs of accelerated skin aging and hyperpigmentation." **Apoterra Night Regenerative Balm with Prickly Pear + Vitamin C** blends the antioxidant with rose hip, jojoba, and sea buckthorn oils. \$42/1 oz.; [rodales.com](http://rodales.com)

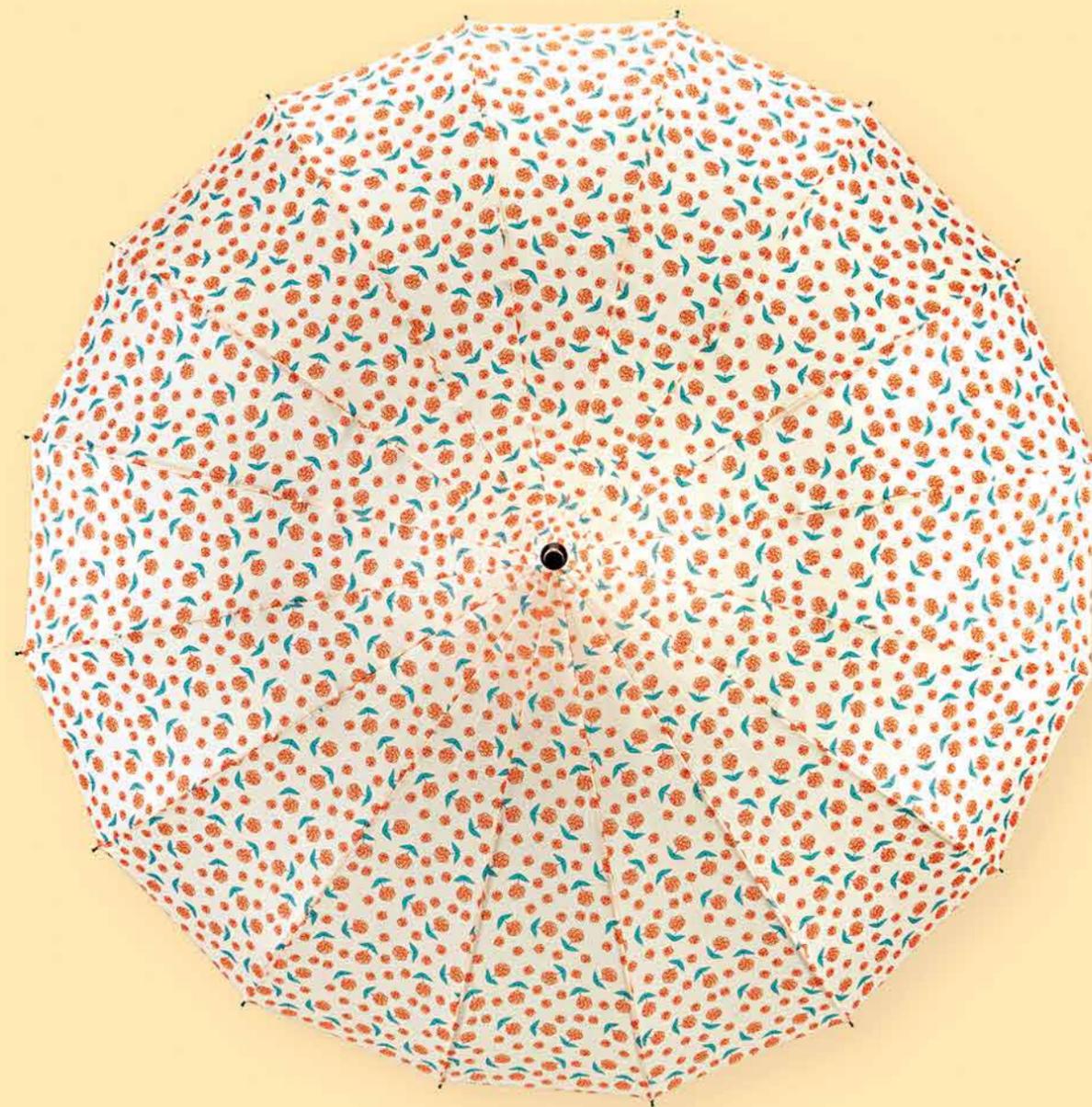


The inflammatory sap of aloe vera cools skin and speeds wound healing. Squeeze it straight from the plant to calm angry burns or try a soothing moisturizer infused with the ingredient, such as **Coola Suncare Radical Recovery After-Sun Lotion**. \$32/6 oz.; [rodales.com](http://rodales.com)



DNA-repair enzymes penetrate deeply, helping to reverse spots and wrinkles, and activate cell regeneration to slow the aging process. **DNA-EGF Intensive Renewal** uses only enzymes from marine and botanical sources. \$135/1 oz.; [dnaegfrenewal.com](http://dnaegfrenewal.com)

# THE RETURN OF THE PARASOL



Before sunscreen, ancient Egyptians used the first umbrellas to protect VIPs from the sun. Ever since, parasols have come in and out of vogue. Jane Austen was a fan; so was Monet. Now they're popping up again at outdoor music festivals like Coachella and the New Orleans Jazz Fest. With a larger circumference than the brim of most hats, they shield skin without sunscreen's slippery residue, and they won't mess up your hair. The **Blue Avocado Crook Handled (Eco) Umbrella** uses a BPA-free fabric made of 50 percent postconsumer plastic bottles, fortified by rain-resistant and SPF 55-plus coatings. \$16, [blueavocado.com](http://blueavocado.com)