

Choosing Sunscreen for children

First, you don't need to buy a special sunscreen just for your kids.

Second, a sunscreen isn't better because it is more expensive. Some of the highest rated sunscreens are from Target and Walgreens.

Third, when trying a new product on your child, apply a little to the wrist and monitor for reaction before using it on the entire body.

Things to look for when shopping for sunscreen:

- It provides **broad-spectrum UVA and UVB protection**.
- It provides an **SPF of 30 to 50**.
- It is **water-resistant**. Even if you aren't swimming, outdoors you may be sweating, so a water resistant sunscreen is best.
- It is **hypoallergenic and fragrance free**, especially if your child has sensitive skin.
- It is in a form that is easy to use on your child, and re-applied throughout the day as directed.

Broad-Spectrum Sunscreens provide UVA and UVB protection.

To get good protection from UVA rays, look for sunscreens that list titanium dioxide, or zinc oxide as an ingredient, look for one or more [sunscreen ingredients](#) that provide UVB protection. Choose a sunscreen that is PABA free. Also apply sunscreen lipbalm on lips.

UVA & UVB? UVA damage occurs in shortwave (320 to 340nm) and long-wave (340 to 400nm), while UVB occurs between 280 to 320 nm. UVA tends to penetrate into the skin, while UVB damages the top layer of skin.

Common Ingredients for UVA Protection: Zinc Oxide and Titanium which gives some, but not the entire range of the spectrum

Common Ingredients for UVB Protection: Octyl methoxycinnamate, Octyl salicylate, Octocrylene

SPF is a measure of UVB protection, NOT UVA. In fact, many sunscreens labeled "broad spectrum UVA/UVB" do not protect against the entire UVA spectrum (short and long waves).

Sunscreens and Sunblocks available for children:

- Aveeno Baby Sunblock lotion, SPF 55
- Badger SPF 30 Unscented Natural Sunscreen
- Banana Boat Baby Tear-Free Continuous Spray or UltraMist kids Sunblock, SPF 50
- Blue Lizard Australian Suncream, SPF 30
- Bull Frog Kids FastBlast Sunblock Spray, SPF 36
- California Baby Water Resistant, Hypo-Allergenic Sunscreen, SPF 30+
- Coppertone Kids or WaterBabies Sunscreen Lotion, SPF 50
- Hawaiian Tropic Baby Faces & Tender Places Sunblock Spray, SPF 50+
- Neutrogena Kids Spray Waterguard Sunblock Mist or Pure & Free Baby SPF 60+
- Target Up & Up Sport Continuous Spray SPF 30
- Walgreens Sport Continuous Spray SPF 50

The Primary Goal is to avoid sunburn or excessive sun exposure. If the sun exposure is likely to be minimal, there may be more risk from the absorption of toxins from the sunscreen than the limited sun exposure.