

Sun products cheat sheet

As I wrote about in the July issue of Health Revelations, many sunscreens contain a disturbing mix of ingredients. Remember: skip the *sunscreen*. Reach instead for a good *sunblock*. Take this list with you when you go shopping for your sun care products. It will show you which ingredients you should avoid, and some products I recommend.

Avoid:

- **Benzophenone:** Can cause skin irritation and allergic reactions. Also, it mimics estrogen.
- **Aluminum:** (usually combined with other chemical names—but it's still aluminum) This heavy metal stresses the immune system and may be linked to cancer.
- **Homosalate:** Mimics estrogen.
- **Octinoxate:** (or octyl-methoxycinnamate): Another estrogen mimic.
- **Padimate-O:** Linked to DNA damage.
- **PABA:** May cause skin irritation and allergic reactions.
- **Diethanolamine (DEA):** Can form cancer-causing nitrosamines.
- **Triethanolamine (TEA):** It's listed in the Chemical Weapons Convention. Enough said.
- **Parabens (All the sisters: butyl-, ethyl-, methyl-, and propyl-):** A preservative that may mimic estrogen.
- **Synthetic fragrances:** Can worsen allergies or asthma—and often unlabeled.

Burt's Bees: Chemical-free sun products that contain titanium oxide—which means it doesn't get absorbed and actually does the job of blocking harmful rays. Found in many groceries and natural food stores now. (www.burtsbees.com)

Dr. Hauschka: I especially like the Sunscreen Stick SPF 30 (which contains micronized titanium dioxide). (www.drhauschka.com)

JASON Naturals: I like the Earth's Best Organic Sunblock, Chemical Free SPF 30+ (zinc oxide and titanium dioxide). (www.drugstore.com)