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The 12 Best Sunscreens to Soothe Sensitive Skin

These skin-friendly formulas help prevent irritation.

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CATHERINE FALLS COMMERCIAL

By now, we all know that sunscreen is a non-negotiable part of any and every beauty routine. Everyone should be wearing **sunscreen** every day, period. However, even **natural sunscreen** can sometimes be irritating if you have sensitive skin. Many sunscreen formulations contain added fragrances, alcohol, or chemical sun filters that may bother sensitive skin.

Sunscreen is important for everyone, but it may be even more critical for those with more sensitive skin. “Sensitive skin can react more severely to UV radiation, leading to sunburn, irritation, and an increased risk of skin cancer,” says **Dr. Rachel Westbay**, board-certified dermatologist at **Marmur Medical**. “Sensitive skin often has a compromised barrier, making it more prone to irritation and inflammation. Sunscreen acts as an additional protective layer.” She also notes that sun exposure can worsen common skin conditions like rosacea and eczema. Ahead, find our picks for the best sunscreens for sensitive skin, according to dermatologists, ELLE editors, and rave reviewers.

BEST OVERALL

La Roche-Posay Anthelios Mineral Ultra-Light Face Sunscreen SPF 50



\$37 at Amazon

\$38 at Ulta Beauty

\$37 at Dermstore

PROS	CONS
<p>⊕ Fast-absorbing and soothing to skin</p>	<p>⊗ Some might not like the liquid formula</p>

This fluid formula absorbs quickly and feels ultra-light on skin. It's also made with La Roche-Posay's signature thermal water, which acts as a soothing antioxidant that calms and supports the skin barrier.

Key ingredient: Thermal water

Size: 1.7 fl. oz.

Amazon rating: 4.4/5

Our expert says: “This French brand’s sunscreens contain newer sunscreen filters that provide long-lasting UVA protection and which have yet to be approved by the FDA, despite their popularity in sunscreens from other countries. La Roche-Posay is one of the few companies with products sold in the U.S. with this type of UVA protection. This particular drugstore-available sunscreen is a favorite of mine because it is 100% mineral with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, is fast-absorbing, provides a matte finish, and does not leave a white cast the way many mineral-only formulations do. It is formulated with their patented Cell-Ox Shield technology, a powerful antioxidant complex to help protect skin from free radicals caused by UV rays.” —*Dr. Westbay*









What kind of sunscreen is best for sensitive skin?

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Sunscreen is important for everyone since unprotected sun exposure can lead to premature aging or skin cancer. That's why when it comes to sunscreen, the formula that you'll actually consistently wear is the best formula for you.

"Sunscreens are generally categorized as either mineral or chemical," says Dr. Zeichner. "Chemical sunscreens contain organic UV filters, which means they are compounds that contain carbon atoms. mineral sunscreens contain oxide or titanium dioxide. They are referred to as inorganic filters since they do not contain any carbon-based compounds. Generally speaking, most dermatologists recommend mineral-based sunscreen for people who have sensitive skin. While both chemical and mineral sunscreens are equally effective, mineral sunscreens, generally speaking, tend to be better tolerated by people with sensitivities. For my patients with sensitive skin, I recommend mineral sunscreens that contain only zinc oxide, or combination of zinc oxide, and titanium dioxide." Those with sensitive skin might also want to look for calming ingredients like colloidal oatmeal or aloe.

What ingredients should someone with sensitive skin avoid in sunscreen?

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Avoid the usual skin irritators, like fragrance and essential oils. “Sensitive skin of all types should avoid sunscreen sprays or gel formulations that tend to contain potentially dehydrating alcohol,” says Westbay.