

Is Sunscreen Safe for Kids?

Description

Did you know the Friday before Memorial Day is [National Sunscreen Day](#) (aka “Don’t Fry Day”)?

I used to forgo sunscreen all of the time. Going Mom would always get on to me about needing to protect my skin, but I would just wave it off and go about my day ignorant to how the sun affects me. At least I played it safe for my kids when they were babies and kept them covered our [Onya Baby carrier](#).



Covering our precious cargo before walking with the original sunscreen.

If sunscreen were food, I would’ve spent hours researching it trying to decide what is good, what’s bad, and the ingredients that make it so, but this is an area I overlooked. Anyone who knows me, knows I’m very peculiar about what I eat, but I need to be more aware of other things that threaten my health as well. Like, for instance, sunscreen!



After a runâ€¦..and no
sunscreen.

Kelley did her research and bought [Organic Badger Baby Sunscreen](#) to put on Avery. Youâ€™d think I wouldâ€™ve just put some on myself at the same time, but thatâ€™s part of my stubbornness.

I hate rubbing it in because it gets caught in my arm and leg hair too much. Good reason, right? Since my dear wife is persistent about getting me to use sunscreen (I guess she loves me or something!), I thought Iâ€™d be smart and just buy a spray version; problem solved!

Nope, problem *not* solved! Now she was on to me about how bad the spray kinds are, [especially for kids](#)! Well crap, will I ever get it right?! I blindly argued that thereâ€™s no difference even though I had no clue about sunscreens. Kelley, on the other hand, had been reading several sources on the subject.

Needless to say, Kelley sent me links to prove why certain sunscreens are harmful and I finally admitted defeat. Note to self, donâ€™t argue about things you have no clue about for so long; it gets you nowhere! Double note to self; just donâ€™t argue with your wifeâ€¦.EVER!

I promptly returned the toxic spray sunscreen.

Hereâ€™s a quote from the link Kelley sent me regarding sunscreens:

Could nanoparticles cause internal damage if they penetrate skin or are inhaled?

Yes. Though sunscreen lotions do not pose penetration concerns, inhalation of nanoparticles particles is dangerous for many reasons. EWG strongly discourages the use of powder or spray sunscreens using titanium dioxide or zinc oxide of any particle size.

Read the full article from the [Environmental Working Group here](#).

Now, on to the question of this post; is sunscreen safe for kids? Like most answers out there, yes and no. There hasnâ€™t been enough research to definitely say sunscreen is harmful, but the effects are greater on a babies than older children and adults.

From what I read, itâ€™s best not to apply sunscreen to babies under 6 months and to avoid the sun as much as possible. Sorry, Avery, we already messed up there. Forgive us, please?

The [FDA has an informative post](#) on the topic of sunscreen for babies along with useful tips on keeping baby safe in the sun.

- Keep your baby in the shade as much as possible.
- Consult your pediatrician before using any sunscreen on your baby. If you do use a small amount of sunscreen on your baby, donâ€™t assume the child is well protected.

- Make sure your child wears clothing that covers and protects sensitive skin. Use common sense; if you hold the fabric against your hand and it's so sheer that you can see through it, it probably doesn't offer enough protection.
- Make sure your baby wears a hat that provides sufficient shade at all times.
- Watch your baby carefully to make sure he or she doesn't show warning signs of sunburn or dehydration. These include fussiness, redness and excessive crying.
- Hydrate! Give your baby formula or breast milk if you're out in the sun for more than a few minutes. Don't forget to use a cooler to store the liquids.
- Take note of how much your baby is urinating. If it's less than usual, it may be a sign of dehydration, and that more fluids are needed until the flow is back to normal.
- Avoid combination sunscreens containing insect repellants like DEET. Young children may lick their hands or put them in their mouths. According to the AAP, DEET should not be used on infants less than 2 months old.
- If you do notice your baby is becoming sunburned, get out of the sun right away and apply cold compresses to the affected areas.

The [Badger](#) sunscreen only has zinc oxide as an active ingredient and works great for everyone in our family. [The EWG rates this sunscreen very high on their list.](#)



Unlike chemical-based sunscreens that are absorbed into the skin, zinc oxide and titanium dioxide sit on top of the skin. A benefit of this, besides not soaking into your skin (did you know your skin is your biggest organ and absorbs so many chemicals each day?), is that they start working upon application. The chemical kind needs 15 – 20 minutes to allow time for absorption before they begin to protect.

An [article on BabyCenter.com](#) explains this in detail and is yet another post worth reading. As mentioned in the article, never trust the label on products and make sure to scrutinize the list of ingredients. Hey, that’s™s like I do with food; now we’re™ talking my language!

The takeaway from all of this can be summarized in a few bullet points:

- If possible, avoid exposing a baby under 6 months to the sun altogether.
- If not possible, keep baby under shade and/or use a sunscreen with only zinc oxide or titanium dioxide as the main ingredient.
- Do not, under any circumstances use a spray sunblock on yourself or baby.
- Don’t™ trust the labels! Please read the ingredients and know what you are slathering all over yourself and your precious child!
- I’m™ an idiot for doubting my wife and taking so long to acknowledge that she was right.

Thank you, Kelley, for “exposing” me to the reality of sunscreen! Now we’re™ having fun in the sun and keeping safe!



Please, have fun and keep yourself and your little ones safe out there!

For a full list of safe sunscreens for the entire family, check out the [EWG's list](#). And, last link, [here's a list of ones to avoid](#).

Do you use sunscreen for yourself or your baby?

Have you strained to find the right kind or are you like I was and never thought much of it?

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