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**Sun Safe &  
Skin Smart**

Issue 17

# SUN SAFE & SKIN SMART

CHOOSING THE BEST  
SUNSCREEN DURING &  
AFTER TREATMENT

Written By: *Josanna Gaither*  
Executive Director of the  
Ricardo Fisas Foundation

Your skin deserves extra care and protection when undergoing oncology treatment. Chemotherapy, radiation, and targeted therapies can leave your skin more sensitive, dry, and vulnerable to the sun's damaging rays. That's why choosing the right sunscreen—and using it daily—is not just a summer habit but a year-round necessity. Let's break down the types of sunscreens, which ingredients to look for (and avoid), and how to naturally and effectively stay sun-safe.

“  
THE BEST SUNSCREEN IS THE ONE YOU'LL  
ACTUALLY USE EVERY DAY. MAKE IT A  
HABIT; YOUR SKIN WILL THANK YOU.  
”



## UNDERSTANDING SUNSCREEN TYPES

### MINERAL SUNSCREENS

Act like tiny mirrors on your skin, bouncing UV rays off it before they can cause any trouble. Common ingredients include titanium dioxide and zinc oxide.

These protective ingredients will greatly benefit sensitive, compromised, or post-treatment skin.

#### BENEFITS:

- » Gentle and non-irritating
- » Offers immediate protection
- » Less likely to cause allergic reactions
- » Broad-spectrum by nature (protects against both UVA and UVB)

### CHEMICAL SUNSCREENS

Act like little UV bodyguards—soaking up the sun's rays and turning them into heat that your skin releases like a boss.

Common ingredients include avobenzene and octinoxate. These are oftentimes better for those without skin sensitivity who prefer lightweight or water-resistant formulas.

#### BENEFITS:

- » Easier to apply without a white cast
- » Often more water/sweat resistant
- » Effective and available in many textures (lotions, gels, sprays)

## SLATHER THIS, SKIP THAT

### INGREDIENTS TO LOOK FOR

- » **Zinc Oxide & Titanium Dioxide:** mineral-based, non-irritating, and ideal for sensitive skin
- » **Niacinamide:** soothes redness and supports skin repair
- » **Vitamin E:** a powerful antioxidant that helps keep skin moisturized

### INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

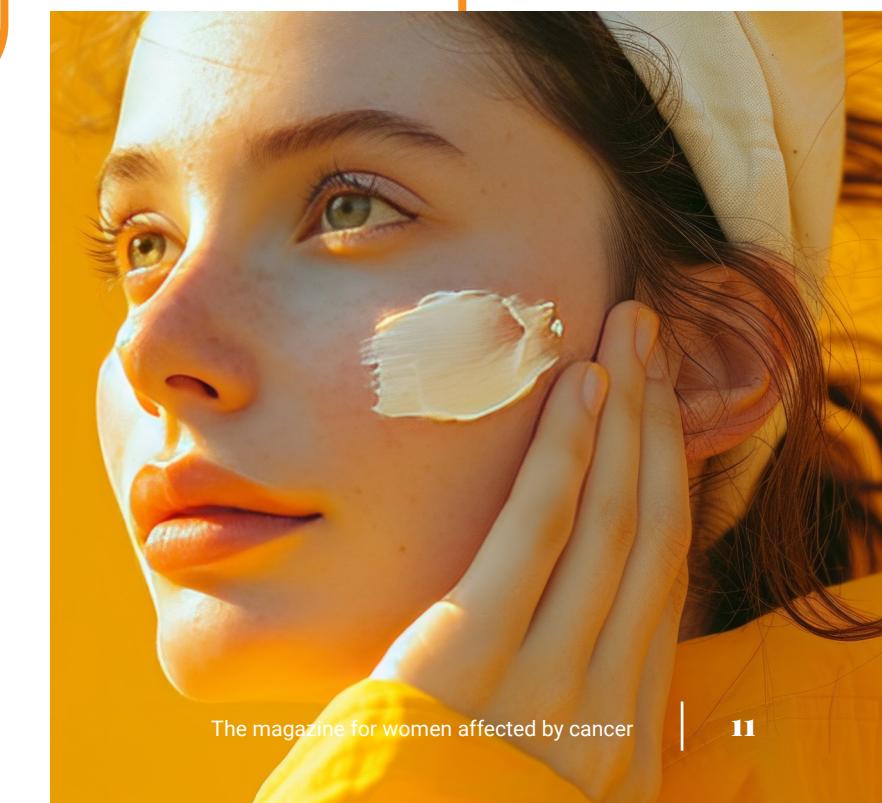
- » **Oxybenzone:** Linked to allergic reactions and potential hormonal disruption
- » **Retinyl Palmitate (Vitamin A):** Can increase sun sensitivity and should be avoided during treatment
- » **Pure Essential Oils:** These can trigger irritation, especially on treatment-weakened skin
- » **Alcohol-Based Formulas:** May excessively dry or sting delicate skin

**KEEP IN MIND:** If your skin is sensitive or healing, chemical sunscreens may sting or cause irritation. In that case, stick to mineral-based options.

## WHOLE BODY PROTECTION

**Apply Generously and Reapply Often** – Use at least a nickel-sized amount for the face and slather it on your body (your skin will thank you!). Reapply every two hours and after sweating or swimming.

**Protect All Exposed Skin** – Cancer treatment can sensitize the scalp, ears, hands, and even the back of the neck. Apply sunscreen everywhere—don't forget your lips, eyelids, and ears!





## GO BEYOND SUNSCREEN

Wearing UPF clothing is an easy, reliable way to add more protection for your skin, especially when it needs a little extra love.

Shade like a pro from 10 to 4: think wide-brim hats and breezy long sleeves for a sun-safe style boost. Pop on gloves while driving to keep those rays from sneaking in.

Slide on those sunglasses to shield your eyes and the delicate skin that smiles with you.

Avoid tanning beds and limit time in the direct sun, even when it's cloudy; those UV rays don't take a day off.

Stay consistent year-round – UVA rays (which contribute to aging and skin cancer) are present all year long and can even penetrate windows.

## CHOOSE WHAT FEELS GOOD & WORKS FOR YOU

Not all sunscreens are created equal, and what works for one person may not feel good on someone else's skin. During cancer treatment, your skin can change, and your sunscreen might need to change with it.

The most effective sunscreen is the one you'll use daily. Look for broad-spectrum protection with SPF 30 or higher and always test a small patch if trying a new product.

Your skin is hard at work—honor it by giving it the care and coverage it needs to thrive. Remember, sunscreen isn't one-size-fits-all. What feels great on one person might not feel great for someone else, especially during cancer treatment. As your skin changes, your sunscreen might need a glow-up too.

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## CONTRIBUTOR'S BIO

With over 30 years in the beauty industry, Josanna Gaither now leads with heart as Executive Director of the Ricardo Fisas Foundation, bringing comfort, confidence, and connection to those navigating cancer. Passionate about the healing power of touch, she finds joy in guiding others to serve with compassion. Married and a devoted mom to three creative, kind-hearted kids, she's grateful to lead a mission her whole family shares—turning care into a calling and service into a daily joy.