

The beauty prep - and products - for a sunny day

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NEW YORK — It's time for the bathing beauties to march in full force to the nearest waterside oasis and take a perch in the sun.

Still, before summer's goddesses can soak up their golden rays, there has to be some preparation - and use of a few products - or they face the risk of splotchy **skin**, brittle hair and cakey makeup that could cause some cringe-created wrinkles. That could ruin even the best day at the beach.

Some advice from beauty experts:

-SUNSCREEN:

The need for sunscreen should go without saying but, despite the direct link made between sun damage and skin cancer, some people still resist, says **Dr. David Bank, of Mount Kisco, N.Y.** Maybe sunscreen irritates sensitive skin or aggravates acne in oily skin? Products that use the minerals zinc oxide or titanium dioxide - which are physical sunblocks instead of those that absorb UV light - are less likely to stir up those conditions, according to **Bank, founder of The Center for Dermatology, Cosmetic and Laser Surgery.**

Zinc and titanium are commonly referred to as "chemical-free" blocks and have some anti-inflammatory properties as well as some anti-bacterial ones so they tend to work well for both skin-type extremes - the sensitive and the acne prone, he adds.

Also, he suggests, those with sensitive skin can look for sunscreens that contain soothing aloe, and those with acne-prone skin should consider oil-free preparations with a light texture. The rub-free mist products limits one contributor of acne: Dirty fingers don't transfer dirt to the pores.

Linda Wells, editor in chief of Allure magazine, encourages application of sunscreen before you even put a swimsuit on. If you're naked, she says, you won't miss a spot.

"You have to put on sunscreen. I know it sounds school marmish, but it's just egregious when people don't wear it. Otherwise, you get wrinkles and dark spots and you look like an old, beat-up handbag," Wells says.

Consumer Reports' July issue finds sunscreen to be pretty resilient.

The magazine's tests found that in addition to protecting against both UVA and UVB rays, they were water resistant - losing no more than 10 percent of UVB protection after being immersed in water for 40 minutes - and lotions and sprays were both effective, even though it's sometimes harder to hit the initial target with sprays.

Still, **Bank** says, no formula is 100 percent water- or sweat-proof, and sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours.

The three to earn Consumer Reports' Best Buy label were Walgreens Continuous Spray Sport SPF, Coppertone Water Babies SPF lotion and Target Sport Continuous Spray SPF 36. Aveeno Continuous Protection Spray SPF 45 had the highest rating (92 out of 100 points) but it was more expensive, \$2.43 per ounce versus \$1.33 for the Walgreens product.