

# Reef Friendly Sunscreen

Considered the most biodiverse ecosystem on our planet, coral reefs are integral to the health of our ocean. Yet sadly our reefs are increasingly threatened from human activities. While some threats are on the global scale, like ocean warming and acidification, many are caused locally from stormwater runoff and chemical pollution. As an alternative to sunscreen made with toxic chemicals, mineral-based sunscreen is often used as a “reef friendly” option. The most common active ingredients in mineral sunscreens are zinc oxide and titanium dioxide.

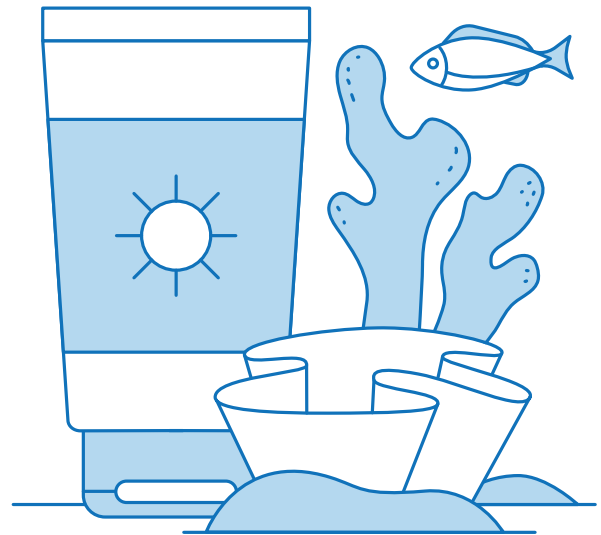
## How do I know if a sunscreen is reef friendly?

**Just check the ingredients label. A reef friendly sunscreen lotion will only contain the minerals zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide as active ingredients.**

If there's a chemical listed, then it's not reef friendly – it's as easy as that.

Beware: the terms “Reef Friendly” and “Reef Safe” are not regulated, with many brands using these terms to describe sunscreen products that contain chemical ingredients known to be toxic to marine life! So don't just trust products with these descriptions.

It's important to actually check the “active ingredients” label on the back of the sunscreen to ensure that reef-harming chemicals are not included. The size of minerals can also have an impact. Be sure to use micro-sized (or “non-nano”) mineral sunscreens to avoid nanoparticles, as these smaller particles can be toxic in high concentrations. It's also good to use products that cut back on single use plastic packaging, either by using containers that are reusable or made from natural materials.



## Check the label!

**Make sure your sunscreen does not contain the following substances:**

- Avobenzone
- Octocrylene
- Triclosan
- Oxybenzone
- PABA
- Nanoparticles
- Octinoxate
- Parabens
- Microplastics

\*If it doesn't explicitly say “micro-sized” or “non-nano” and it can rub in, it probably contains nanoparticles.

**Learn more about identifying reef friendly sunscreens, the negative impacts of chemical-based sunscreens and get a list of some great reef friendly options at [Beachapedia.org/Reef\\_Friendly\\_Sunscreens](https://Beachapedia.org/Reef_Friendly_Sunscreens).**