

APPLYING SUNSCREEN WHERE IS THE PROBLEM?



CONTEXT

For many years, Surfrider Foundation has been consulted on a regular basis about the environmental and human health impacts of sunscreen use in the ocean.

OUR NGO, WHICH ACTS TO PROTECT THE OCEAN, SOUGHT TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE.

We have worked extensively with experts, scientists and specialists, basing our opinion on the latest scientific studies and reports.

We have developed our recommendations to help our community answer this question:

WHICH SUNSCREEN IS SAFEST FOR THE OCEAN?

OUR ANSWER :

LABEL OR NO LABEL, ALL SUNSCREENS HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE OCEAN

NONE OF THEM «PROTECT» IT

EXPLANATIONS

- Numerous scientific studies have shown a link between UV filters, both chemical and mineral, and damage to flora and fauna, as well as risks to human health.

25,000 tonnes of sunscreens are discharged into water every year

- Sunscreens contribute to a significant amount of pollution and stress on biodiversity and water quality. As a result, they further endanger already fragile and weakened aquatic environments.

Significant undesirable effects

The presence of sunscreens in significant concentrations in the marine environment appears to be the cause of bioaccumulation in certain species.

Impacts can be

direct

physiology, behaviour, growth and mortality of species

OR

indirect

disappearance of breeding species and therefore on all the surrounding biodiversity

From a sanitary perspective

While protection from the harmful effects of prolonged sun exposure remains essential, several studies on certain chemical or mineral filters have shown potential allergenic, endocrine disrupting, carcinogenic and even mutagenic effects. Traces of some compounds have been found in blood, breast milk, placenta and urine. Others may disrupt pregnancy, affect the thyroid or pose a risk of infertility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Defending the concept of du «One Health» one environment, one health, Surfrider recommends :

Encourage the purchase of sun care products with certified environmental labels (like the European Ecolabel for instance) that exclude the most controversial UV filters and ingredients:



As recommended by the WHO,

Avoid exposure between 12pm and 4pm.

Wear loose, lightweight clothing, including swimwear, and sun accessories such as umbrellas, hats and sunglasses.

Water activities should take place in the morning or at the end of the day.

SURFRIDER IS URGING MANUFACTURERS

To remove from their formulations chemical ingredients that have not been proven to be harmless to health and the environment, in particular coral reefs.

To cease the use of non-independently controlled labels and vague, simplistic, unclear, unsubstantiated and uncontrolled environmental and health claims on sunscreen products, and any communication that may mislead consumers or lead them to believe that a product has no impact on the ocean and the environment.

SURFRIDER IS CALLING ON DECISION-MAKERS TO

Ban the sale and use of sunscreens containing the controversial substances benzophenone-3, octocrylene, homosalate and octinoxate.

Prohibit the dissemination of misleading or deceptive environmental and health claims, and strictly regulate the use of sunscreens.

Apply the precautionary principle, continue scientific research into the environmental and health impacts of sunscreens, and discard UV filters shown to be harmful to the environment and health.

Facilitate the transparency and clarity of sunscreen product labels for consumers.

THIS STATEMENT IS NOT INTENDED TO CONDEMN CERTAIN BRANDS, BUT TO INFORM USERS ABOUT SUNSCREENS IN GENERAL AND TO CLEARLY SET OUT THE NGO'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE.

