So you are heading out to the beach and can't decide whether to slather on some lotion before you head out the door. It can be difficult to figure out all those bottles on the drugstore shelves.

So here's the question…

When out in the sun and you want to protect your skin, you should choose

* Sunscreen
* Sun block
* A lotion with both
* Not on my skin!
* What's the difference?

What's the difference? Good question. Although the words are often used interchangeably, there is a difference.

Sunscreen is a chemical formulation that absorbs the sun's rays, protecting you from UVB rays. Sunscreens are classified as drugs in Canada and must adhere to the requirements as set out in Canada's Food and Drugs Act. Different sunscreens may have different classifications based on their active ingredients. Sunscreens do let some rays in.

Sun block contains physical ingredients that reflect the sun's rays rather than absorbing them. The two most common ingredients are titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. Sun block tends to reflect both UVA and UVB rays.

Most commercial brands are a combination of sunscreen and sun block. The advantage of this may be better sun protection today, but **in the long run using sunscreen may put you at risk of long-term health issues** .

When trying to sort through all this information I turned to the people in the know to find out what they do. Alain, from the Green Beaver Company, only uses sun block as the effects of the various active ingredients in sunscreens concern him. Karen, from Bare Organics, makes her own sun block with zinc oxide as a base.

If you are like me and won't be making your own, try Mexitan a more natural alternative that can be found at the following retailers…

Ethical Consumer: Sun Care

No matter what product you use

* Cover up
* Avoid the sun during peak hours, 11AM to 3PM
* Wear a hat with a brim
* Use sunglasses

And enjoy the summer!

{linkr:related;keywords:sun;exclude:55,116,59,128,156,76,88,129,169;limit:5;title:If+you+like+this%2C+try+these}