# Investigation Reveals Widespread Inaccuracy in SPF Claims of Sunscreens



A recent investigation revealed significant concerns about the SPF claims of various sunscreens available on the market. The study, conducted by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), found that many sunscreens did not meet the SPF levels advertised on their labels. The EWG tested 51 sunscreen products from retailers like Amazon, CVS, Target, and Walmart in 2021 and discovered that the products contained only 59-42% of the SPF that their labels claimed.

Several well-known brands were scrutinized for their SPF claims. Clinique's SPF 30 Mineral Sunscreen was alleged to provide only a third of its stated SPF, though Clinique denied these findings. Hawaiian Tropic's Mineral Skin Nourishing Milk SPF 30 was also found to provide inadequate protection, claiming to offer a third of the stated SPF, a finding the brand rejected.

Other brands like Alba Botanica and L'Oréal faced similar issues. Alba Botanica's Sensitive Mineral Lotion failed to protect against UVA rays despite meeting SPF claims for UVB protection. L'Oréal and its subsidiary Lancôme were involved in class action suits over misleading claims about product efficacy related to reapplication frequency.

Further studies indicated that high SPF products might lead consumers to feel falsely secure, potentially causing improper application and higher sun exposure risks. An example includes La Roche-Posay's Anthelios SPF 60 Lotion, which reportedly failed to offer the expected level of UV protection.

Waterproof claims also came under fire. The FDA prohibits US manufacturers from labeling sunscreens as waterproof, yet international brands like MISSHA and A'PIEU marketed their products with such claims, leading to a class action lawsuit in New Jersey in February 2024.

The overarching message from these findings emphasizes that consumers should scrutinize sunscreen labels and understand proper application to ensure effective sun protection.