What is bemotrizinol? New FDA Approved Sunscreen Ingredient

By: Caroline Mortelliti

Key takeaways:

- **First new sunscreen ingredient in 20+ years:** On June 9, 2026, the FDA approved bemotrizinol (BEMT) as the first new sunscreen ingredient in over two decades.
- **Better protection:** It's a true broad-spectrum filter (UVA + UVB in one molecule) and highly photostable, so it won't break down quickly in sunlight the way current sunscreens do.
- **Feels better on skin:** No white cast, lighter texture, non-irritating, and good for patients with sensitive skin.
- **Not on shelves yet:** Bemotrizinol products expected to become over-the-counter in late 2026 into 2027.

On June 9, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved bemotrizinol (BEMT, marketed as Tinosorb S and Parsol Shield) as a permitted active ingredient in over the counter sunscreens.[1] [2] It is the first new UV filter approved by the FDA in more than 20 years and the first chemical sunscreen filter to receive the agency's "Generally Recognized as Safe and Effective" (GRASE) designation.[1] [3] The order takes effect on August 9, 2026, with the first products expected to reach U.S. shelves in late 2026 or early 2027.[3] [4]

Why is bemotrizinol different?

Most chemical sunscreen filters currently available in the US provide strong protection against either UVB rays (which cause sunburn) or UVA rays (which contribute to skin aging and skin cancer), but few cover both.[3] Until now, broad-spectrum UVA/UVB protection in US sunscreens were only found in mineral sunscreens provided by zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.

However, now Bemotrizinol is the first FDA-approved chemical UV sunscreen that provides broad-spectrum UVA and UVB protection. It also offers several additional advantages including being highly photostable, meaning it resists breakdown when exposed to sunlight. By comparison, avobenzone (the primary non-mineral UVA filter) rapidly breaks down with UV.[3] [5] Bemotrizinol maintains its effectiveness during prolonged sun exposure and can also improve the stability of other UV filters, including avobenzone and even zinc oxide, when used in combination.[5] [6]

What it means for how BEMT sunscreen looks and feels?

Unlike mineral sunscreens, bemotrizinol is transparent and oil-soluble, so it does not leave the white cast commonly associated with zinc oxide. This may improve cosmetic appearance and encourage more consistent sunscreen use, particularly among individuals with darker skin tones.[1]

It is also lightweight and feels less greasy than many existing sunscreens.[3] [7] As discussed in our previous sunscreen education blog, the best sunscreen is ultimately the one you'll wear every day - and cosmetic feel and appearance plays a major role in adherence.

On a molecular level, bemotrizinol is a large, stable molecule that largely remains on the skin's surface rather than being absorbed into the bloodstream. FDA review found minimal skin absorption, no evidence of estrogenic activity, and a low risk of skin irritation.[3] [7] This makes it a great option for individuals with sensitive skin or rosacea.

Why is the United States only approving bemotrizinol now?
Although new to the US, bemotrizinol has been used safely in Europe, Australia, and Asia since approximately 2000.[8] The delay largely reflects differences in drug regulations. In Europe, sunscreens are regulated as cosmetic products, whereas in the US, they are regulated by the FDA as over-the-counter drugs. As a result, adding new sunscreen ingredients requires substantially more rigorous review.[3] [8]

Should you change your sunscreen routine?
No, not yet! Bemotrizinol-containing sunscreens are not yet widely available in the US. In the meantime, dermatology organizations continue to recommend using your current broad-spectrum sunscreen consistently.[9] [10] The FDA's final order becomes effective on August 9, 2026, and products containing bemotrizinol are expected to become available in late 2026 or early 2027.[3] [10]

References

1. FDA. FDA expands sunscreen options for the first time in 20 years. News release. June 9, 2026. https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-expands-sunscreen-options-first-time-20-years
2. Yoo J. Bemotrizinol: FDA approves first new sunscreen filter in 20+ years. JaneYooMD.com. 2026. https://www.janeyoomd.com/fda-approves-bemotrizinol-bemt-new-sunscreen-filter-2026/
3. Jeremias S. 5 questions dermatology patients may have about newly-approved bemotrizinol. AJMC. June 16, 2026. https://www.ajmc.com/view/5-questions-dermatology-patients-may-have-about-newly-approved-bemotrizinol
4. MD Anderson Cancer Center. Bemotrizinol sunscreen is coming to the U.S.; learn its benefits. July 2, 2026. https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/bemotrizinol-101--what-to-know-about-this-new-sunscreen-ingredient.h00-159856923.html
5. CNN. FDA approves new sunscreen ingredient used for years in Europe and Asia. June 9, 2026. https://www.cnn.com/2026/06/09/health/new-sunscreen-bemotrizinol-wellness
6. Certified Laboratories. Bemotrizinol in the U.S.: why SPF product manufacturers should prepare now. 2025. https://certified-laboratories.com/blog/bemotrizinol-in-the-u-s-why-spf-product-manufacturers-should-prepare-now/

7. Environmental Working Group. In major win for U.S. consumers, FDA approves first new sunscreen ingredient in 25 years. News release. June 9, 2026. https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news-release/2026/06/major-win-us-consumers-fda-approves-first-new-sunscreen
8. Environmental Working Group. What sunscreen filter bemotrizinol means for safer sun protection. May 19, 2026. https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/2026/05/what-sunscreen-filter-bemotrizinol
9. AIM at Melanoma Foundation. The FDA just approved a new sunscreen ingredient — what it means for patients with skin cancer, survivors, and the general public. June 9, 2026. https://www.aimatmelanoma.org/
10. Yoo J. Bemotrizinol is now FDA-approved. JaneYooMD.com. June 18, 2026. https://www.janeyoomd.com/bemotrizinol-fda-approved-sunscreen-2026/