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St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix

By Island Green Living Association

Go Green with Reef-Safe Sunscreen

Protect your skin while protecting the environment. Remove sunscreens that contain the “toxic 3 Os” of oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene from your packing list. These chemicals can harm humans and marine life, especially coral. Instead, opt for non-nano mineral-based sunscreens that contain zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, the only ingredients currently considered “generally recognized as safe and effective” (GRASE) by the FDA.

Thanks to the work of the St. John-based nonprofit Island Green Living

Association and the territory’s legislators, the Safe Sunscreen Law was passed in 2020, banning sunscreen products containing the “Toxic 3 Os” in the region. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), scientific evidence indicates these chemicals are deadly to coral and threaten overall reef health. They cause coral bleaching, “zombie” coral that looks healthy but cannot reproduce, along with other issues. Coral reefs take up less than 1 percent of the ocean floor but

are home to more than 25 percent of marine life and are vital to protecting coastlines.

Don’t rely on sunscreen labels that say “Reef Safe,” as this can be misleading. Instead, check to be sure the active ingredients include only non-nano zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide and NO oxybenzone, octinoxate, or octocrylene. Several safe sunscreens are sold in the U.S. and United States Virgin Islands, including Australian Gold, Bare Republic, Caribbean Sol, Stream2Sea, and Tropic Sport.



Scan the QR code for recommendations from Island Green Living. Be sun-safe and reef-safe, too; it’s the law.