



# Mineral make-up: a buyer's guide

DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE HITTING THE COSMETICS COUNTER TO BUY MINERAL MAKE-UP, ADVISES Dhav Naidu

## THE BENEFITS

The major benefit of mineral make-up is that it generally does not clog the pores, allowing the skin to "breathe" naturally. As such, it is less likely to aggravate an acne condition or cause flare-ups.

Cosmetic surgeon Dr Van Park says: "Ingredients such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide have anti-inflammatory properties. Zinc oxide is especially good for skin that is irritated, sensitive or has recently undergone cosmetic laser procedure or peels. It's also good for people suffering from rosacea and acne."

These ingredients are also commonly found in sunscreens, but this does not make mineral make-up an alternative to sunscreen, even though most mineral products claim to have a sun protection factor of at least SPF15.

Dermatologist Dr Phillip Artemi says: "A separate sunscreen application is still vital because there is only a secondary benefit from the sunscreen properties of mineral make-up."

## THE CRITICS

Like everything, mineral make-up has its fans and its critics. One recurring argument is that

## BRANDS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- **Natio:** Has a complete mineral range including mineral nail polish. [www.natio.com.au](http://www.natio.com.au)
- **Nude by Nature:** A small range, but does exactly what it says at an affordable price. [www.nudebynature.com.au](http://www.nudebynature.com.au)
- **BareMinerals:** First introduced in 1976, this brand started the minerals craze. Great products and colour ranges to suit all skin tones. [www.spauniverse.com.au](http://www.spauniverse.com.au)
- **Elizabeth Arden:** The packaging is great, the formulations are soothing and the colours are spot on. [www.elizabetharden.com.au](http://www.elizabetharden.com.au)
- **Musq:** The brand for colour, it also has some good complexion products. [www.musq.com.au](http://www.musq.com.au)

traditional make-up manufacturers always included minerals in their formulations.

Dr Artemi says: "Mineral make-up is not a miracle product, but a make-up alternative." He says non-mineral cosmetics also include minerals but often also contain fragrances, binders, synthetic dyes and preservatives.

There have recently been concerns about bismuth oxychloride in mineral cosmetics causing skin irritations. It is a common ingredient in both traditional and mineral make-up because it gives a silky feel and helps camouflage fine lines and minor discolourations.

Dr Lee-Mei Yap, from the Dermatology Institute of Victoria, says: "To date, there is no strong scientific evidence that bismuth oxychloride, a by-product of copper and lead processing, causes skin allergies and irritation."

## TIPS FOR BUYING

So what should you be looking for when buying mineral make-up?

- Check reputable websites and magazines and talk to friends who use mineral make-up.
- If you have problem skin, talk to a clinical dermatologist.
- Explore a few brands and ask for samples.
- Check the ingredients list. Products should be fragrance and preservative free and should contain titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, mica and iron oxides as "star" ingredients.
- If you're not sure of an ingredient, look it up on the Cosmetic Safety Database website, [www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com)
- Products should not contain parabens, fragrances, binders or synthetic dyes.
- Compare the net weight of products. Don't be fooled by a large container with hardly anything in it. **b**

Celebrities are wearing it, glossy ads are promoting it and many people are buying it. Mineral make-up is the latest buzz. Just about every beauty company has jumped on the bandwagon to ensure they get a slice of the action.

AC Nielsen reports that in 2005, the total sales of mineral make-up in the US was only \$US5.4 million (\$A6 million), but it jumped to \$US149 million (\$A168 million) in 2007.

In Australia, although there are no statistics available, anecdotal evidence suggests the situation is similar.

"Demand has risen exponentially from people seeking more natural skincare, people with problem skin and people who want a natural-looking complexion," says Mandy Gray, owner of True Solutions, which imports BareMinerals.

## WHAT'S IN MINERAL MAKE-UP?

Minerals are naturally occurring substances, generally mined from the earth's crust. They are pulverised into fine micro-particles and added to preparations from foundations to nail polish.

The main minerals used are titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, iron oxide, mica, gold and magnesium. There are no national standards or guidelines for mineral products. A product can be labelled "mineral" even when minerals make up less than one per cent of its content.

## WHY IS IT SO POPULAR?

The mineral make-up trend is being driven by a desire for "cleaner" products. Cosmetics were seen to have become a by-product of the petrochemical industry and there was growing concern about allergies and intolerances.

Mineral make-up generally contains less chemical-based ingredients such as parabens, fragrances, binders and synthetic dyes, which can help eliminate some of these problems.

The mineral trend started out as the preserve of small brands, but the surge in popularity saw a flurry of new players enter the market, including major cosmetics brands.

"Since launching mineral make-up in February 2009 our foundation category has grown by 33 per cent," says Jane Villeneuve, marketing director for Elizabeth Arden Australia. "A third of our foundation sales are now from Elizabeth Arden Mineral Makeup."