

mineral makeup



A Special Report
by Paula Begoun and Bryan Barron

Mineral makeup has become a sizzling hot topic these days garnering an amazing amount of attention as if some miracle of cosmetics has been created. Infomercials glorify its attributes demonstrating magic results with a swift brushed-on application, and there are online chat rooms dedicated to the topic. With all this buzz it's no wonder that cosmetic companies of all sizes are being created, or simply jumping on the mineral makeup bandwagon launching their own versions to try and catch the consumers eye.

This is an example of a typical letter I've been receiving in droves about mineral makeup products:

Dear Paula,

I've been hearing more and more about mineral makeup and how superior it is to normal makeup formulations. Aside from the standard, "It's all pure and natural and no dangerous synthetic chemicals are used" claims, mineral makeup supposedly can block UV rays, provide total yet natural-looking coverage, is suited for even the most sensitive of skin types, won't clog pores or worsen acne, and somehow can even improve your skin. Are any of these statements founded? Is mineral makeup really that much better than the best non-mineral makeup a drugstore or cosmetics counter can offer, or is this just hype?

None of this is surprising given the litany of claims being asserted for this type of foundation, including the conviction that mineral makeup is equal to, or better than, a skin-care product (it isn't, but I'll get to that later). Somewhere along the way, savvy marketing executives created a term for a rather standard product category and elevated it to a cult status.

When all is said and done, mineral makeup is truly nothing all that revolutionary or failsafe. By any name, technically speaking mineral makeup is simply a type of powder foundation. If you wear a light layer it is a finishing powder or you can put on a little more and it works more like a layer of foundation providing light to medium coverage. In essence, mineral makeup is merely loose or pressed powder created from a blend of "powdery" substances.

While the minerals used in many mineral makeup products are not run of the mill, it is important to know that most pressed powders, whether they are called mineral makeup or not, are made of minerals. Talc is the primary ingredient in standard powders, and talc, most assuredly, is a natural mineral. But the clamor over "mineral makeup" argues that the minerals being utilized in those special products are unique, natural, and far better for skin.

Sifting through the miasma of ads and infomercials makes figuring all this out a dusty issue. Thankfully, this is one topic in the world of cosmetics that is easy to clear up.

It Isn't All Natural

More than any other makeup product, mineral makeup's claims revolve around what it doesn't contain. Those selling mineral makeup warn how other companies' loose or pressed powders are tainted by the presence of talc (even though it's a natural earth mineral), fragrance, fillers, and "harsh chemical dyes." According to most every catalog and website selling mineral makeup I've seen, they all want you to believe theirs is the ideal product containing only the good and none of the "bad," while simultaneously being the perfect choice for every skin type and skin care problem or concern. Of course, the appeal of these products being all "natural" and therefore organic and healthy for skin is hard for the consumer to ignore.

As is true of most cosmetic advertising there is some truth amid lots of overblown hyperbole. Mineral makeup can be an option as a foundation or a powder over more typical liquid foundation. But looking at the facts instead of the hype, there is very little reality amid the exaggerations, misleading information, and of late, what can only be called intentional fabrications.

Here is what you need to know: Of the more popular mineral makeup lines—such as Youngblood, Bare Escentuals, and Jane Iredale—whether in pressed or loose powder form, mineral makeups tend to contain the same basic ingredients, which are bismuth oxychloride, mica, titanium dioxide, and zinc oxide. Depending on the company you may see the addition of minor ingredients (such as boron nitride), which contribute to the product's texture or application. Some companies include antioxidants but these extras make up a tiny amount of the product and can't remain stable in the packaging or even suspended very well in a powder, meaning they are added for clever marketing claims because they can't help your skin in this format.

Before we go any further, it is best to eliminate the most erroneous of the claims being made about mineral makeups. You may have heard something akin to this information I found in an online beauty article: "many people have turned to using makeup if it contains pure minerals. These [mineral] makeups differ from others in that they are made up entirely of minerals, and have no chemicals or preservatives." I know many women believe this, but there isn't one word of truth in that comment. It is troubling that marketing, rumor, and bad reporting can alter fact. First, any ingredient in a cosmetic, by

definition, is a chemical. Even water is a chemical in a cosmetic formulation. Chemical should not be a scary word!

Definitions aside, from an ingredient standpoint, there is nothing all natural about the ingredients in mineral makeup. For example, the standard primary ingredient in most mineral makeups is bismuth oxychloride, which is not found in nature and isn't better for skin than talc. In fact, in many ways talc is a far more natural, unadulterated, pure ingredient than bismuth oxychloride. Bismuth oxychloride is manufactured by combining bismuth, a by-product of lead and copper metal refining (dregs of smelting if you will) mixed with chloride (a compound from chlorine), and water. Its use in cosmetics is due to its distinct shimmer, pearlescent appearance and its fine white powder texture that adheres well to skin. On the downside, bismuth oxychloride is heavier than talc and can look cakey on skin. For some people, the bismuth and chloride combination can be irritating. All the claims revolving around how mineral makeups are better for skin are marketing hype to the max. But I'll explain more about this a bit further on.

What about the other ingredients in mineral makeups? There are several that show up regularly in most of them, including such mineral lines as Monave, Larenim, Baresense, Sheer Cover by Leeza Gibbons, Glominerals, Pur Minerals, Emani, Colorflo, Youngblood, Skin Alison Raffaele, Aroma-leigh, Colorscience, Neutrogena, L'Oreal, Jane Iredale, Bare Escentuals, and Everyday Minerals. These ingredients include the following along with an explanation of their effect and usefulness.

Titanium dioxide and zinc oxide: The presence of titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide often serves as the sunscreen in many mineral makeups. At the same time, these ingredients provide enhanced coverage and a matte finish. Keep in mind that even when these proven mineral sunscreens are listed in the formula, it is still imperative to check that one or both of them are listed as active ingredients and the product is rated with an SPF 15 or greater. Simply having titanium dioxide or zinc oxide in the formula is not a guarantee of sun protection. Without an SPF rating resulting from FDA-mandated sunscreen tests, you won't know just how much protection you're getting, and that's dangerous for the health of your skin.

Although these two minerals are ideal sunscreen agents for those with sensitive skin (zinc oxide is the primary ingredient found in diaper rash ointments) or conditions such as rosacea, their occlusive nature can contribute to clogged pores. This isn't new information, yet it doesn't stop companies selling mineral makeup from advertising their product as being ideal for those suffering from acne or breakouts,

with some companies actually stating their mineral makeup helps cure it (an absolute falsehood with no published research showing this to be true)!

Mineral makeup powders tend to contain a 25% concentration of titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide. Liquid foundations or lotions with SPF 15 using only titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide as the sunscreen active ingredients tend to contain a much smaller concentration of these pigments. The amount of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide in mineral makeups create the coverage and opaque quality of the powder, allowing more coverage than the usual talc-based powders. However, if you have determined that liquid foundations with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide exacerbate your breakouts, it is quite possible that a mineral makeup containing an even larger concentration of those ingredients will have the same, if not a more pronounced, effect.

What is true is when mineral makeup companies speak of the non-irritating nature of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. Neither is known for causing an irritant response or sensitizing reaction on skin (Sources: *Cosmetics & Toiletries*, October 2003, pages 73–78; and *Cutis*, September 2004, pages 13–16 and 32–34).

Bismuth oxychloride: A little more information about this ingredient is warranted because it is the common thread that shows up in almost every mineral makeup product being sold. It's a grayish-white, inorganic powder with a natural metallic shine. The binding properties of bismuth oxychloride are what give the mineral makeups containing it their smoothness and texture. Its thicker texture demands more careful application, which is why most mineral makeup companies recommend special flat-cut, dense powder brushes to work the product into the skin. This method of application also provides considerable coverage and helps ensure longer wear.

Bismuth in of itself seldom occurs in nature. Instead, it is manufactured synthetically. *The International Cosmetic Ingredient Dictionary and Handbook*, Eleventh Edition, 2006, lists bismuth oxychloride as a synthetic. So much for mineral makeup being the natural solution to applying foundation and creating a flawless face!

Actually, bismuth is chemically similar to arsenic. That is more shocking than significant, but that kind of fact is similar to what mineral makeup companies use to make you scared of the ingredients in other powders not deemed "mineral makeup." Just like cosmetic grade mineral oil is not related to the crude petroleum from which it originates, neither is bismuth oxychloride identical to bismuth and therefore, the arsenic association is irrelevant. So the bismuth oxychloride used in cosmetics is indeed non-toxic. This is just a good

example of how skewed a company's definition of "natural" can be, and how they can twist factual information to make other cosmetic company ingredients sound harmful.

Unlike titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, bismuth oxychloride can cause slight skin irritation (Source: www.sciencelab.com/xMSDS-Bismuth_oxychloride-9923103). Although talc has the same potential for slight irritation, bismuth oxychloride is more likely to cause an allergic contact dermatitis due to its pearlescent nature (Source: www.emedicine.com/derm/topic502.htm). This is more of a concern when bismuth oxychloride is the main ingredient in a cosmetic, as it is for many mineral makeups.

Companies selling mineral makeup often speak of the talc used in other pressed and loose powders as being harmful and carcinogenic, but the research doesn't support this hysteria in the least. Although there is epidemiological evidence that frequent use of pure talc over the female genital area may increase the risk of ovarian cancer (Sources: *International Journal of Cancer*, November 2004, pages 458–464; and *Anticancer Research*, March–April 2003, pages 1955–1960) this evidence does not prove a direct link. Further research has shown this epidemiological evidence to be questionable. A comprehensive review of several studies in *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology* (August 2002, pages 40–50) stated that "Talc is not genotoxic, is not carcinogenic when injected into ovaries of rats. There is no credible evidence of a cancer risk from inhalation of cosmetic talc by humans."

Dismissing talc as a cheap, inelegant, less desirable, filler material is inaccurate because talc serves as the essential backbone for a number of the most luxurious-feeling powders from dozens of lines ranging from L'Oreal to Chanel. The best among those powders have a softness and virtually seamless finish on the skin that most mineral makeup lines should envy. The higher grades of talc are not "filler" materials, they are essential to creating a powder's gossamer texture and skin-like finish.

Mica: is a mineral silicate with a crystalline shine. It is used as pigment in most mineral makeups (as well as in many eyeshadows, blushes, and powders in general) to add a luminescent shine to the product's finish. Mica comprises a group of crystallized minerals that naturally occur in thin, separated sheets. It is available in a variety of colors from pale green to black, and is also available colorless. Compared to bismuth oxychloride, titanium dioxide, and zinc oxide, mica has a nearly weightless and noticeably silky texture. Some women—particularly those with oily skin—may not like the shine mica imparts because it makes oily areas look shinier. And for those with noticeable wrinkles it can make skin look more wrinkled than it really is. In the long run this is only an esthetic issue which makes mica a benign addition to any makeup, "mineral" or otherwise.

Application: Pore Perfect or Poor Performer?

Most mineral makeups provide opaque coverage (this can be blended to within light to medium coverage range), yet the claim is they do so while looking extremely natural, like a second skin or better than your own skin, which appears to be the case in pictures and on TV infomercials (and just like every other makeup application created for advertising). In real life, that is not what you will actually see. These powders (most of which are tricky to blend because they tend to "grab" onto skin and don't glide very well once they are in place) can be applied sheer, but the very nature of their ingredients results in a textured application that can look powdery and "made-up" on the skin. This is especially true if you have any dry patches on the skin because these mineral powders—many of which claim to be moisturizing which is just ludicrous given the properties of all powder materials, which are absorbent not moisturizing—exacerbate dryness and flaking.

For those with oily skin, mineral makeup can pool in pores and look thick and layered just like any powder can. Generally speaking, mineral makeup is best for normal to slightly oily skin (meaning no signs of dryness and little to no problem oily areas).

Mineral Makeup As Skin Care?

There is no research anywhere proving that mineral makeup is inherently better for skin than other types of foundation. You'll find lots of individual opinions and subjective information about this concept, but that's true of any cosmetic, especially if you frequent beauty message boards and chat rooms. Looking at the facts, it is understandable that some people may like mineral makeups and others wouldn't, but when it comes to claims of fighting acne, moisturizing or cellular repair that is stretching things to the breaking point.

Most of the skin care attributes ascribed to mineral makeup are due to some tangential research about zinc oxide. There is no question that zinc oxide has healing properties for skin (it is FDA-approved as a skin protectant, and a common active ingredient in diaper rash ointments), but those healing properties have to do with skin whose barrier has been compromised, such as with wounds, ulcers, or rashes. In those cases, zinc oxide can facilitate healing (Source: *Wound Repair and Regeneration*, January/February 2007, pages 2–16). But those studies don't use other minerals,

such as mica or bismuth oxychloride, or have anything to do with healthy, intact skin. Zinc oxide is definitely a great sunscreen ingredient and protects skin from both UVA and UVB sun damage with minimal to no risk of irritation and that has immense value. But that can be said of any product containing enough zinc oxide to obtain a decent SPF rating.

Mineral makeup is often recommended for those with rosacea, and for good reason. Most mineral makeup not only provides enough coverage to successfully camouflage the redness from this skin disorder but also contains only a handful of ingredients. Given the hyper sensitive nature of skin struggling with rosacea, the fewer ingredients in a cosmetic product, the better it is for skin regardless of the product. An added bonus: almost all mineral makeups are fragrance- and preservative-free, a rare occurrence in the world of cosmetics, but a real plus for those dealing with rosacea.

Many women may have success with using powder as a foundation, and mineral makeup is included in this category. Mineral makeup, especially those rated with an SPF 15 or greater, can be a three-in-one product (foundation/powder/sunscreen) that can be somewhat easy to apply once you get the knack for it.

One word of warning: as is true for any product with an SPF rating, in order to get the right amount of thorough protection, liberal application is essential, which means a sheer light layer of mineral makeup won't work for protecting your skin from the sun.

If you're currently using mineral makeup and love the results, that's great. The goal of this report is to present the positive and negative points of this type of makeup, and to allow my readers to make an informed decision as whether or not it's the right type of foundation for them (perhaps one that is less messy, or less drying, or less iridescent, or less cakey, which are all part of the problems you can encounter with mineral makeup).

This report wouldn't be complete without a listing of the major mineral makeup brands and their key products. The following list indicates the pros and cons of each company's mineral makeup foundations along with notes on which ones I have found to be a cut above the rest when compared to the competition in this category.

NOTE: All of the mineral makeups listed in this report are fragrance-free.

Bare Escentuals

Bare Escentuals bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15 (\$25)

Pros: Broad-spectrum sun protection from 25% titanium dioxide; mica-based formula has a lighter texture than those based on bismuth oxychloride; Plenty of good shades for fair to medium skin tones; widely available at Sephora stores or the company's own boutiques.

Cons: Shiny finish that appears sparkling on skin; can look heavy and be more difficult to blend than standard talc-based powder foundations; absorbent nature of the titanium dioxide and bismuth oxychloride can make skin feel uncomfortably dry by the end of the day; may pool into pores and change color on persons with very oily skin or oily areas; shades for dark skin tones are available but the titanium dioxide content causes them to appear or turn ash.

Bare Escentuals RareMinerals Skin Revival Treatment (\$60)

Pros: Very absorbent for those with oily skin; available in a small but good range of shades plus a colorless option; mica base has a lighter texture than mineral powders with bismuth oxychloride as the main ingredient.

Cons: Expensive; no proof that the Jurassic Virgin Soil (the company's fancy claim for what amounts to dirt) can improve skin in the prodigious manner claimed; can cause dryness due to the absorbent nature of almost all of the ingredients; as a nighttime treatment, this is akin to wearing makeup to bed, which is never a good idea.

Bare Escentuals Multi-Tasking Minerals (\$18)

Pros: Less shiny finish compared to the bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15 above; the Summer Bisque and Honey Bisque shades have 20% zinc oxide as an active ingredient, rating SPF 20; may be used as eyeshadow base or concealer.

Cons: Same as listed above for the bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15.

Bare Escentuals RareMinerals Skin Revival Treatment deserves a bit more explanation because the list of claims for this pricy product sounds like Nirvana for the skin, only better. For all intents and purposes the showcased ingredient in this product is dirt. ("Dirt" is my term, Bare Escentuals uses "Jurassic, virgin soil," but by any name, soil is just another term for dirt, although soil sounds less, well, dirty). I do have to admit that seeing dirt advertised as skin care is a first.

RareMinerals is supposed to contain 72 organic “macro” and “micro” minerals (though there aren’t 72 minerals listed on the ingredient label—just Organic Soil Mineral Concentrate—so you have to take their word that these 72 minerals are present in this “Virgin” dirt. But given they aren’t listed they would only be present in trace amounts of less than .001 or they would legally have to be included on the label). According to the company, this mixture, along with the other ingredients, will produce firmer, smoother, and brighter skin while at the same time prompting exfoliation and reducing pore size. Essentially, this is being sold as a one size fits all “skin-care” product, “feeding” skin with everything it needs to look its best and function optimally. That part is truly over-the-top because first and foremost, this powder-based product isn’t moisturizing in the least (minerals aren’t moisturizing, if anything they absorb oil). Its mica (meaning shiny) base and the inclusion of other absorbent minerals prevent the water-binding agents in the product from having much, if any, benefit for skin. Actually, the formula isn’t too far removed from the original bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15 only this one is a far more expensive version that doesn’t even include sunscreen. Obviously rare doesn’t mean better. Both are loose powders that go on smoothly and impart a radiant glow to skin, the latter the result of shiny pieces of mica.

The recommendation to wear this at night is just shocking to me. Be forewarned that sleeping with this product on your face will result in makeup stains on your pillowcase, and leaving this stuff on overnight would most likely be drying and irritating. Minerals—even plain talc, chalk or soil of any kind—on the skin aren’t soothing in the least and needs to be washed off, not worn to bed, and this product is no exception.

Getting back to the mineral claims, is there anything to them? Does this “pure mineral concentrate” hold the secret to revitalized, youthful skin? Regardless of the purity of the soil, minerals can’t be absorbed by skin (they are just too big) so any effect would be entirely superficial. Moreover, there hasn’t been much research on topical application of minerals, but we do know that whether they are applied topically or ingested, minerals depend on other factors (most notably coenzymes) to work, and even when that happens the benefits aren’t all that exciting (Sources: *Cosmeceuticals*, *Elsner & Maiback*, 2000, pages 29–30; and *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*, 1997, page 105). There is no substantiated research proving that minerals—whether concentrated or not—exfoliate skin or have any effect on pore size. Any perceived reduction in pore size from using this product is solely from its reflective quality and natural opacity, the same as any other powder foundation. It can work to temporarily fill in large pores, but when washed off, any potential benefit is washed away at the same time.

You may be wondering about the vitamin C (ascorbic acid) in this product. According to the chemists I spoke with, ascorbic acid tends to remain stable in an anhydrous product, which this powder certainly qualifies as. How much of the vitamin C reaches the skin is a question, however, not to mention whether or not RareMinerals uses an effective amount or if it can absorb past the powder and into the skin.

The bottom line is that although RareMinerals may be unique in terms of its extraction process and its use of virgin soil, those elements won’t translate into skin care. It’s just another form of powder, and a rather expensive one at that.

Colorscience

Colorscience Retractable Foundation Brush SPF 20 (\$55; \$36 for refills)

Pros: Blends smoothly, has less drag on skin than many other mineral foundations; includes a built-in, goat hair brush for convenient application with minimal mess; uses additional cosmetic pigments for a greater array of skin-realistic colors; proven to be water-resistant (as is most mineral makeup but Colorscience did the appropriate FDA-sanctioned testing to make this claim); uses titanium dioxide and zinc oxide as active ingredients.

Cons: Same as most mineral makeups: can look thick or heavy on skin, has a dry finish, and imparts shine, which isn’t the best for those with oily skin; the darker shades, while strongly pigmented, tend to leave a silvery-white sheen that can look a bit ashen; definitely a mineral makeup to sample because many of the shades for fair to medium skin tend to turn slightly pink or peach.

Glominerals

Glominerals GloLoose Base (\$37)

Pros: A finely-milled, silky powder that blends beautifully and has a lighter texture than most mineral makeups; soft matte finish with subtle, non-sparkling glow; provides medium coverage while allowing natural skin tone to show through, resulting in a mineral makeup that looks more natural; several neutral shades for fair to medium skin tones; one to try if you have normal to dry skin.

Cons: Does not list active ingredients so no SPF rating (though it does contain titanium dioxide and zinc oxide); no shades for dark skin tones; avoid the Beige shades—all are too pink; application can be messy.

Jane

Be Pure Mineral Makeup (\$6.99)

Pros: Silky texture blends well; relatively easy to apply thanks to built-in soft sponge applicator; small but good selection of neutral shades; minimal shine.

Cons: No sunscreen; may be too sheer for some; removing sponge to apply product with a brush or different sponge results in a thick, chalky-looking finish; bismuth oxychloride can make this feel uncomfortably dry over time.

Be Pure Mineral Powder (\$6.99)

Pros: Lightweight, almost airy texture looks attractive on skin and blends well; subtle shine; not as drying as many mineral makeups.

Cons: No sunscreen; component falls apart almost immediately; brush feels terrible on skin; cap cannot be replaced after use without causing the brush to splay; bronze shade can look ashen.

Jane Iredale

Jane Iredale Amazing Base Loose Minerals SPF 20 (\$42)

Pros: Uses titanium dioxide and zinc oxide as active ingredients; finish is absorbent while looking lighter than most other loose mineral makeups; beautiful range of 15 shades.

Cons: Colors demand careful testing as many go on either lighter or darker than they appear; can look heavier and be more difficult to blend than standard talc-based powder foundations; absorbent nature of the titanium dioxide and bismuth oxychloride can make skin feel uncomfortably dry by the end of the day; may pool into pores and change color on persons with very oily skin or oily areas.

Jane Iredale PurePressed Pressed Minerals SPF 18 (\$48)

Pros: Convenient, less messy application than loose mineral makeup; strong matte finish without an overly thick appearance; sunscreen is a blend of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide; global shades are non-ashy options for dark skin tones (and Jane Iredale is the only company I've reviewed that offers convincing mineral makeup shades for women of color).

Cons: Not the best for those with normal to dry skin due to its very absorbent nature; does not look good over pronounced wrinkles.

Laura Mercier

Mineral Powder SPF 15 (\$35)

Pros: Excellent sun protection with 20% zinc oxide; enviably silky texture from finely-milled ingredients; finishes matte with a subtle, not sparkling, glow; blends better than any mineral makeup I have tested; thoughtful packaging makes this loose powder foundation less messy to apply and transport; every shade is recommended.

Cons: Same potential drawbacks as most mineral makeup; can look and feel too dry over dry or flaky skin; can look thick and eventually pool into large pores on very oily areas; limited shade selection.

L'Oreal

L'Oreal Bare Naturale Powdered Mineral Foundation SPF 19 (\$14.99)

Pros: Features titanium dioxide and zinc oxide as active ingredients; uses talc and a lower amount of bismuth oxychloride for a less shiny finish which is a nice change from the typical iridescence found in most "mineral" makeups; built-in, dense brush is well-suited for applying this type of makeup and helps minimize mess.

Cons: Not nearly as lightweight as the magazine ads imply; the amount of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide lends a heavy, opaque finish that is difficult to soften (and applying this sheer negates its sun protection).

Monave

Monave Loose Mineral Foundation (\$25; \$2.50 for sample-size jars)

Pros: Offers samples of every shade for a nominal fee; very absorbent finish keeps oil in check for hours; full coverage for serious discolorations; minimal shine on the light to medium shades.

Cons: So concentrated that even a sheer application produces opaque coverage that looks dry and chalky; difficult to blend; brags about its full-spectrum sunscreen but does not list active ingredients nor an SPF rating; shades darken or lighten when applied, which makes finding the best match more of a challenge; the darker shades have a strong shimmer finish that makes the face look too glow-y.

Neutrogena

Neutrogena Mineral Sheers Mineral Powder Foundation (\$11.99)

Pros: Packaging includes a built-in brush which makes for minimal mess; application method allows for sheer coverage; layers well for additional coverage; small but good selection of shades.

Cons: Despite the convenience, the included brush isn't nearly as nice as brushes sold separately with the softness and density needed to apply this type of product; no sunscreen; tends to make oily areas look flaky and flat before the end of the day; no shades for dark skin tones unless you want lots of sparkles.

philosophy

philosophy the supernatural powder airbrushed canvas SPF 15 (\$35)

Pros: Sunscreen active is zinc oxide; built-in sponge applicator makes for a convenient, minimally messy application; sponge may be removed and washed to keep it sanitary; long-wearing matte finish suitable for keeping very oily skin in check; sheer to light coverage.

Cons: Contains more bismuth oxychloride than most mineral makeups, thus can be more drying to skin; finish is more sparkling than shiny, which isn't the best for daytime wear; attempting to build meaningful coverage results in a heavy look that doesn't wear as well over dry or oily areas.

Pürminerals

Pürminerals 4-in-1 Pressed Mineral Makeup SPF 15 (\$24.50)

Pros: Sole active ingredient is titanium dioxide; mica- and boron nitride-based formula is dry but unusually silky; smooth application that blends better than most mineral makeup; soft glow finish makes skin look dimensional rather than sparkly; shades for fair to dark skin; sheer to medium coverage that doesn't look thick; good for all but very dry skin; doubles as a setting powder over liquid foundation.

Cons: Despite the name, this product more closely resembles a really good pressed powder than a standard mineral foundation; can still look and feel slightly dry and will exaggerate dry patches of skin.

Pürminerals Mineral Loose Translucent Foundation (\$21.50)

Pros: Dry, silky texture is ideal for oily skin assuming you're OK with a soft shine finish; silica contributes to its absorbent finish without feeling heavy or looking thick on skin; unlikely to pool in pores or turn color on oily skin.

Cons: No sunscreen; only one shade and it's not translucent enough for tan to dark skin tones; coverage is too sheer to successfully diminish redness as claimed.

Sheer Cover

Sheer Cover Pressed Mineral Foundation (\$30; \$19.95 member price)

Pros: Beautifully soft, silky texture blends better than most mineral makeup, be it pressed or loose; sheer to medium coverage whose finish feels matte but leaves a soft glow; does not look thick or powdery; small but outstanding shade selection.

Cons: Formula is closer to a pressed powder foundation, though that's a plus for some; no sunscreen; no shades for very dark skin.

Sheer Cover Mineral Foundation (\$26.95; \$16.95 member price)

Pros: Finely-milled powder makes the drying minerals (titanium dioxide and bismuth oxychloride) apply less opaquely; natural matte (in feel) finish that remains absorbent without being chalky; eight mostly neutral shades (avoid Almond and Nude).

Cons: No active ingredients listed, thus no SPF rating; despite the finely-milled texture it can still be overly drying and turn color over oily areas; very sparkly finish; powder brushes that accompany the Sheer Cover Intro Kit are inferior.

Skin Alison Raffaele

Skin Alison Raffaele Mineral Powder Foundation (\$29.50)

Pros: Very simple formula is suitable for sensitive or rosacea-afflicted skin; mica base contributes to a lighter-than-usual texture; sheer to medium coverage, with zinc oxide supplying some opacity and a dry finish; very neutral shade range.

Cons: No sunscreen actives listed, no SPF rating; can be too drying for normal to dry skin; slightly shiny finish may not please those with oily skin; the darkest shade looks ash; no shades for very dark skin.

Urban Decay

Urban Decay Surreal Skin Mineral Makeup (\$28)

Pros: Built-in sponge applicator minimizes mess and allows for quick application; otherwise, shares the same positive traits as the Bare Escentuals bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15 above, minus the sunscreen; small shade selection but all of them are good.

Cons: Same as Bare Escentuals bareMinerals Foundation SPF 15 above; no active ingredients listed, thus no SPF rating; no shades for dark skin tones.

Youngblood

Youngblood Mineral Cosmetics Natural Loose Mineral Foundation (\$34.95)

Pros: Same as Bare Escentuals bareMinerals SPF 15 Foundation above, minus the sunscreen.

Cons: Same as Bare Escentuals bareMinerals SPF 15 Foundation above except Youngblood did better with their darker shades; no active sunscreen ingredients so no SPF rating.

Youngblood Mineral Cosmetics Mineral Compact Foundation (\$37.50)

Pros: Dry texture has a lightweight but very absorbent matte (in feel) finish for oily to very oily skin (assuming you don't mind a slightly shiny look); provides sheer coverage that doesn't look pasty; almost every shade is neutral (avoid Rose Beige) and has options for fair to tan skin tones.

Cons: Powder contains rice starch, which may contribute to blemishes because food-based ingredients can feed the bacteria that cause acne; not recommended for anyone with any degree of dry skin.



1030 SW 34th Street, Suite A • Renton, WA 98057-4810
1.800.831.4088 • PaulasChoice.com