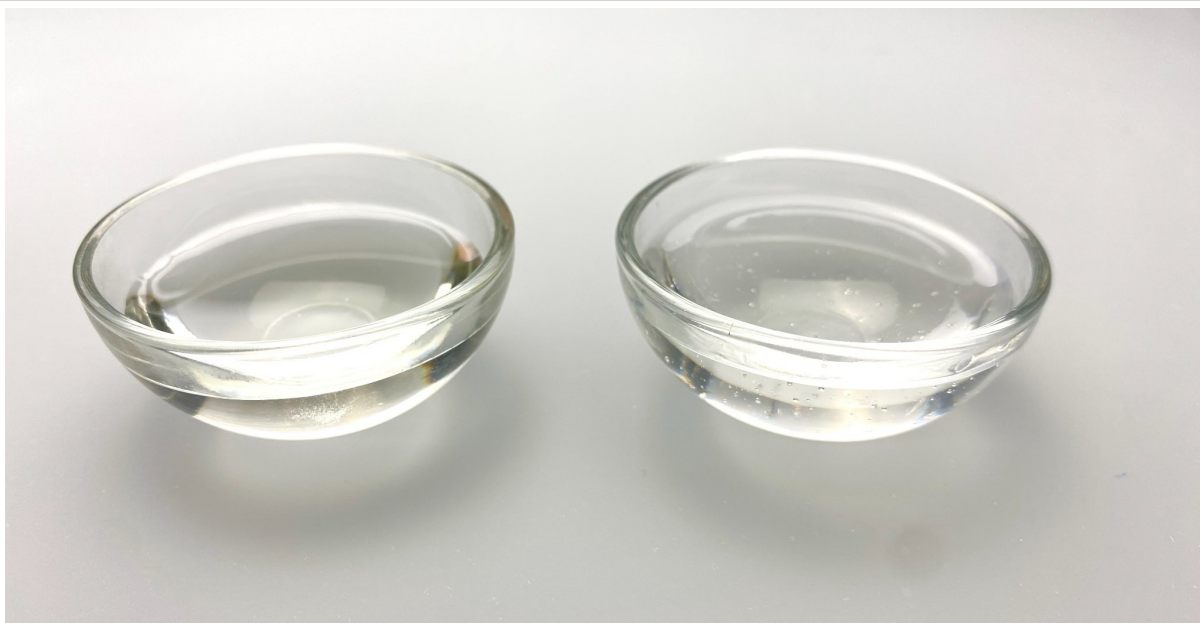


Bisabolol vs. Beta-Glucan

Choosing soothing ingredients for sensitive skin formulations

by Joan Morais



IN THIS GUIDE

Learn how bisabolol and beta-glucan differ in solubility, benefits, skin feel, usage, and processing - and how to decide whether your sensitive-skin formulation needs one ingredient or both.

Two Soothing Ingredients, Two Different Roles

Bisabolol and beta-glucan can both support sensitive-skin products, but they are not interchangeable. Bisabolol is an oil-soluble terpene alcohol selected mainly for targeted soothing and skin conditioning. Beta-glucan is a water-phase polysaccharide selected for hydration, barrier support, soothing, and light protective film formation.

Bisabolol: Oil-Soluble Soothing

Cosmetic bisabolol may come from Candeia tree, chamomile, fermentation, or synthetic production. The INCI name Bisabolol does not reveal the source, manufacturing method, or natural-origin classification, so the exact supplier grade matters.

Why Formulators Choose It

- Provides targeted soothing and can help reduce the appearance of irritation-related redness.
- Adds light emollient glide without a tacky, gummy, or heavily film-forming finish.
- Fits oil phases and many cool-down phases with little effect on viscosity at typical levels.
- May enhance dermal absorption of other ingredients, so evaluate the complete formula carefully.

Beta-Glucan: Water-Phase Hydration + Barrier Support

Beta-glucan is a family of polysaccharides obtained from sources such as oats, yeast, mushrooms, fungi, algae, or fermentation. Depending on the grade, it can improve hydration, softness, comfort, and protective skin feel. High levels or poorly hydrated powders can create tackiness, stringiness, pilling, or clumping.

JOAN'S FORMULATION NOTE

Bisabolol is commonly used around 0.1-1%, with 0.2-0.5% a useful facial-emulsion starting range. Beta-glucan is entirely grade-specific: supplier recommendations may range from about 0.02% for a concentrated modified active to 1-5% for diluted liquid dispersions.

Bisabolol vs. Beta-Glucan at a Glance

Use these ranges as starting references only. Always formulate from the technical documentation for the exact commercial grade you purchase.

Characteristic	Bisabolol	Beta-Glucan
Ingredient type	Terpene alcohol	Polysaccharide
Solubility + phase	Oil soluble; oil or cool-down phase	Usually water soluble or dispersible; water or cool-down phase
Primary role	Soothing, visible-redness support, skin conditioning	Hydration, barrier support, soothing, protective film
Skin feel	Light, smooth, non-tacky, subtly emollient	Soft and cushioned; can become tacky or gummy at excess levels
Typical usage	0.1-1%; practical facial start 0.2-0.5%	Grade-specific; approximately 0.02-5%

SENSITIVE-SKIN FORMULATION TIP

A soothing active does not automatically make a finished product gentle. The preservative, fragrance or essential oils, emulsifier, surfactants, pH, packaging, and manufacturing process all influence tolerability.

Which Should You Choose?

- Choose bisabolol for targeted soothing, visible-redness support, and a light non-tacky sensory profile.
- Choose beta-glucan when hydration, barrier support, and a soft protective after-feel are the priority.
- Use both for a rounded sensitive-skin moisturizer when the full formulation remains balanced and well tested.

Formulator's Decision Guide

Use this checklist before choosing and incorporating a commercial grade.

- Define the primary goal: targeted soothing and visible-redness support, hydration and barrier support, or both.
- Confirm the exact INCI, source, manufacturing method, vegan status, and natural-origin or certification documentation.
- Check active concentration, carriers, and preservatives; do not compare a concentrated powder directly with a diluted liquid.
- Follow the supplier's usage rate, pH range, temperature limit, and dispersion or hydration instructions.
- Match the ingredient's solubility to the correct phase and predict its effect on skin feel, viscosity, and stability.
- Evaluate the complete formula and complete appropriate stability, preservative efficacy, packaging compatibility, and safety testing.

The Main Takeaway

REMEMBER

Neither ingredient is universally better. Bisabolol excels at lightweight targeted soothing; beta-glucan excels at hydration and barrier support. Select the commercial grade that matches the product goal, then test the complete formulation.

LEARN MORE

Learn how to select, combine, and test active ingredients in the [Professional Natural Skin Care Formulation Course](#) from Joan Morais Cosmetics School.

Read the full Bisabolol vs. Beta-Glucan article and explore professional cosmetic formulation training at www.JoanMorais.com.

Educational formulation reference by Joan Morais. Always follow supplier specifications and verify preservation, stability, packaging compatibility, and finished-product performance.