Sunscreens – sunburn – skin cancer! Be warned!

RégimA gives advice on using the right sun screen

Since the introduction of sunscreens and sunblocks skin cancer rates began to climb rather than fall. Melanoma rates doubled from 6 to 13 per 100,000 people since 1973. Skin cancer diagnoses surpass all other cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

RégimA is one of the only South African companies that do the COLIPA UVA testing to EU regulation standards - the strictest in the world. Many people are confused about sunscreens - it's not the SPF that is the main thing to look for is just for UVB, the product must have undergone the Colipa testing for UVA protection as well.

UVB is the sunburn that you see but UVA is the penetrating ray that causes premature ageing and skin cancer – the silent killer! Some sun care products claim one only need apply once a day, this is extremely dangerous if one is exposed to harsh sunshine.

The new legislation due to be implemented in South Africa in 2013 will make companies comply with the regulations if they want to sell their products. Responsible companies, if they have not done so already, will want to comply by removing any false claims, knowing their products are saving skins and ultimately saving lives.

The consumer needs to be made aware that they should look for products not just with SPF but the product must have been UVA and UVB and Colipa tested. Hopefully now with the Consumer Protection Act in South Africa legislation will be quickly enforced, complied with and companies will be forced to prove the sun protection their product contains.

The following are the very latest FDA regulations:-

**No more SPF 100.**

Often, people grab whatever sunscreen is labelled with the highest SPF assuming it's the best protection. This sparked the FDA to make "SPF 50+" the highest rating allowed on a product.

Why? According to the American Academy of Dermatology, an SPF 15 product blocks 93 percent of UV rays, SPF 30 blocks 97 percent, and SPF 50 blocks 98%, but once you go up to SPF 100 that number stays at 98%. However, the FDA will allow an SPF of higher than 50 if the company can prove that a product provides more protection than SPF 50. So far, none have been able to do so.

High SPF products are a problem as they tempt one to stay out in the sun longer, which increases the risk of skin damage. They also contain greater amounts of sun-blocking ingredients and chemicals than low SPF sunscreens. These ingredients may pose health risks. It is better to use a sunscreen with SPF 15 to 30 and reapply more often.

**No more "waterproof, sweatproof, and sunblock."**
These terms are too misleading, says the FDA. The name sunblock is banned because no sunscreen can block 100 percent of the sun’s UV rays. All products will be called sunscreens from here on out. Waterproof and sweatproof will be banned because they imply all-day protection. Sunscreens are however, permitted to claim they are water-resistant.

- Clear definition of “broad-spectrum.”
  SPF technically applies only to UVB rays, which cause sunburn, not UVA rays which cause cancer and ageing. “Broad-spectrum” sunscreens theoretically protect against both, but up until now they have never had to prove it.

  That’s changing, in order to bear the label, any sunscreen labelled SPF 15 or higher must meet wavelength tests to show that it protects against UVA rays. Sunscreens with an SPF lower than 15 won’t even be allowed to bear the “broad-spectrum” label.

- Standardised verbal descriptors
  These should be used alongside traditional SPF factor indicators to provide guidance for the choice of the appropriate sunscreen product. Example: low: 6 and 10; medium: 15, 20 and 25; high: 30 and 50; very high: 50+

With the consumer in mind strict regulations regarding labelling are now coming into place and the deadline to comply regarding labelling is 2013.

**RégimA** has already complied with the new regulations and the extra Colipa testing.

For further information about sun care and **Regima** products visit the website: [www.regima.com](http://www.regima.com)