

## ■ CONSUMER ADVICE

# Not all sunscreens are created equal

There are two types on the market but the latest version offers more protection

**S**UMMER'S here. For those like me, with a love-hate relationship with the sun, this column's for you.

The last time I wrote about sun protection was two years ago. And considering we live in the land of (almost) continual sunshine — and that skin cancer affects everyone, not just pale natives — this column is probably long overdue.

But what prompted me to write about it in December 2010, and again today, is one and the same: sharing information that, I hope, allows consumers to make better choices.

Two years ago it was ultraviolet (UV) protection swimwear that got me a bit hot under the collar.

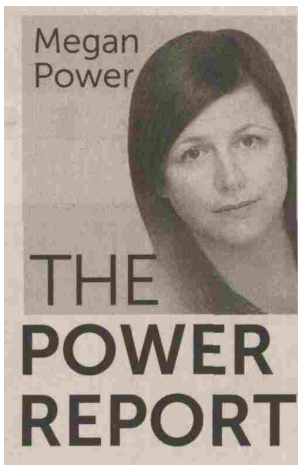
It turned out that the standard UV swimwear rated SPF 50 sold in most stores wasn't guaranteed when wet, stretched or worn, while swimwear boasting a more stringent international standard — the UV Standard 801 — was.

Although SPF 50 swimsuits offer excellent protection, my advice then — which still stands — was to pay the extra for UV Standard 801 swimwear if you wanted, and could afford it, the highest protection available.

Today, we're talking sunscreen. There are two different kinds on the market, with the more advanced and recently produced one offering better protection than the other.

Again, the cover provided by the original sunscreen does the job very well. But if a consumer wants the best protection available, then the new Colipa-tested sunscreen is the way to go.

Following tests by the Cancer Association of SA (Cansa) on a handful of local sunscreens, it was revealed



*By March most in-house brands will adhere to Copila standards*

that not all sunscreens are created equal.

It turns out only some SA sunscreens conform to a new international standard, known as the Colipa UVA Protection Claim, which ensures more effective protection against

UVA skin damage (see Colipa factbook for more).

It's important to note that local sunscreens aren't currently obliged to test to the European Colipa standard, but to the relevant South African National Standard, which, up to now, has been ample. However, new SA standards based on Colipa will be finalised within the next year.

The more stringent standard will also form part of Cansa's new endorsement seal (logo on packaging) from April 1. From that date, all brands wanting to qualify for the updated Cansa seal will have to comply with Colipa, and ultimately with the new local standard incorporating it.

The good news, however, is that more than 100 products (see Cansa's audited list below) already comply with the latest standard, representing about 70% of what's on the market.

This figure should increase next year.

Cansa chief executive, Sue Janse van Rensburg, said: "We're aware that most in-house brands will be adhering to Colipa standards by March 2013, which will increase the representation in the retail market."

### 25 COLIPA-COMPLIANT BRANDS YOU CAN COUNT ON

- Nivea — 18 compliant products
- Evrysun — 14
- Tropicone — 13
- Vichy — 10
- Ambre Solaire — 7
- Pure & Protect — 6
- SPAR Sola — 5
- BioEarth — 4
- Eucerin Sun — 4
- Clicks Sun Protect — 3
- Island Tribe — 2
- OnGuard — 2
- Sun Therapy — 2
- Techniblock — 2
- Reitzer Pure Sun — 2
- IQ — 2
- Pick n Pay Sun Sore — 1
- Mr Price SunDoctor — 1
- Kool-a-Sun — 1
- Lipsano — 1
- Safe Sun Project — 1
- Skin Kids — 1
- Sun Skin — 1
- Sun Drops — 1
- Sun Skweez — 1

● This list does not represent all Colipa-compliant sunscreens in SA. The list is provisional and comprises sunscreen brands whose names and validation certificates have been received so far for inclusion. Additional names will be added as and when they qualify, up until March 2013. Thereafter, all Colipa-compliant sunscreens will carry the updated Cansa seal for easy identification. Some companies with Colipa-compliant sunscreens may choose not to provide their brand or product names for inclusion on Cansa's list, opting to communicate with consumers in their own way instead. For a more detailed list of compliant products, go to <http://bit.ly/Qk16Fs>.

## What is Colipa-compliant sunscreen?