

Press release

« Que choisir » lodges a complaint against sunscreen products manufacturers
Clarification by Cosmed

On July 5th, the “UFC Que choisir” magazine filed a complaint for “mislead” against 5 sunscreen products manufacturers.

According to “Que choisir”, the anti-UVA protection of 5 products with SPF 50+ designed for children would be insufficient and would be “dangerous”, justifying a withdrawal from the market and a call for boycott for one of the products.

Cosmed is now able to confirm that the position of the “UFC Que choisir” is incorrect. It constitutes an obvious misinformation of consumers and distributors of these sun products.

A wrong method

The magazine made its experts (not cited) proceeding to a series of *in vitro* analysis using the international ISO 24443 standard. For perfectly identified technical reasons, every serious expert knows that this standard is not supposed to be used for products with high index 50 or 50+, or for sunscreens with mineral filters ; the 5 products blamed by “Que choisir” being precisely in these categories.

The appropriate standard in these cases is the ISO 24442 *in vivo* standard. The manufacturers used the right method. This standard is also the one recognized by the control authorities.

Independent experts confirmed rightly the safety and the high level of protection of these products. Besides, one of the accused laboratories has been inspected by the Directorate-General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Prevention of Fraud (French DGCCRF) in June on sunscreen products, and received no remark.

A lack of transparency with possibly very serious consequences

Refusing to publish the expert names, the protocol and detailed results, “Que choisir” consciously prevents manufacturers and control authorities from having a critical and contradictory look. The magazine exposes itself to the risk of disrepute, as it was the case in a recent past. Already in July 2012, another magazine launched a similar alert in the newspaper “Liberation”, without knowing that the SPF measurements published were incorrect¹. The counter-expertise, conducted under the supervision of a bailiff, demonstrated that the “expert” made a mistake... about the measuring instrument! Published in October 2012, this important study did not gain media attention. Sunscreen products were safe for the consumer, but the damages were already done for companies. Several SMEs and micro-businesses suffered from challenging economic difficulties. That’s why Cosmed asks “UFC Que choisir” to publish with no delay the name of its experts and the complete protocol with detailed technical results.

Manufacturers show total transparency. Contacted by Cosmed, they decided to ask for an official control of their products by the French Health Authority (ANSM) and the DGCCRF.

Consumers need to know the truth!

Concerning evaluation tests for UVA protection index, the debate becomes quickly technical and impossible to understand for a non-specialist. It is easy for the “Que choisir” magazine to write exaggerated and alarmist words, in order to catch media and readers’ attention: “an insufficient protection”, “unacceptable results”, “UFC lodges a complaint to protect consumers...”

What consumers should know:

- **A product with a SPF 50+ index conforming to the regulation (as this is the case for the 5 accused products) stops 99.8% of UVB and 94% of UVA.**
- **A product with a SPF 30 index stops 97% of UVB and 86% of UVA.**
- **A sunscreen product protects only if correctly used.** Recommendations for the correct use are as important as the SFP index: use the right quantity, renew regularly, do not expose children between 10 am and 4 pm, make them wear slight protective clothing, use a cream with a high index on exposed areas of skin...

Cosmed association decided to support manufacturers concerned by the unfounded and abusive legal action engaged by the “UFC Que choisir”. Cosmed will bring technical, scientific and regulatory expertise to the procedure.

[¹ Press release Cosmed 2012](#)

Contact:

Jean-Marc GIROUX, President, doctor in Pharmacy, toxicological and pharmacological expert

giroux.jm@gmail.com

Tel: (+33) 6 17 08 54 75

COSMED is the professional association for the cosmetic sector in France with 700 members (SMEs and medium-sized companies). COSMED takes part in the working groups of the European Commission for cosmetic regulation, and in national and international standardization bodies. Its regulatory and scientific contributions and position statements are internationally recognized. COSMED contributes to the development of a regulatory framework, making possible the marketing of safe and efficient cosmetic products. www.cosmed.fr