



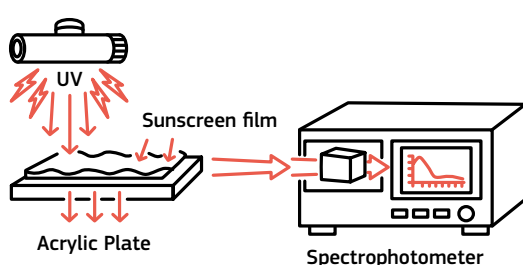
How is the SPF of your sunscreen tested?

Using sunscreen to protect your skin from the sun helps to prevent skin ageing and cancer.

Before sunscreens can be sold in the EU, they need to be tested. Testing on humans (in vivo), in a laboratory (in vitro), or a hybrid method (HDRS), are the main methods used to verify SPF.

The in vitro and HDRS methods, published in December 2024, represent a shift to ethical, economical and reliable testing.

What is in vitro testing?



A precise amount of product is applied to two types of acrylic plates.
A spectrophotometer measures how much UV radiation passes through the sunscreen film.



Pros



More ethical – no testing on human subjects



Better repeatability and standardisation



Generally faster and cheaper



Cons



Currently not suitable for powders and stick formats



Currently cannot test claims like water-resistance

What can market surveillance authorities do?

Conduct regular controls of sunscreens on the market using:



Laboratory or computer-based tests



Checks of documents and labels



Warnings to consumers about products with a serious risk

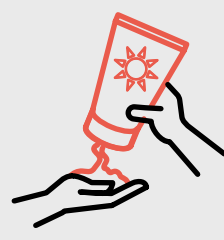


Instructions to manufacturers to label the product correctly, or to improve the formulation in line with the product claim

What can you do as a consumer?



Wear protective clothing and avoid sun exposure from late morning to early afternoon – don't rely on sunscreen alone



Apply and reapply sunscreen with a suitable SPF and UVA protection generously and evenly



Buying a sunscreen? First check that it's not listed on [Safety Gate](#)



Note the opening date and discard if texture or smell changes