

What's New Under the Sun?

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Introduction

The first suncare ingredients were believed to have been introduced in the late nineteenth century leading to the eventual launch of the suncare brands Hamilton's Sunburn Creams and Ambre Solaire in the early to mid-1930s. The purpose of these early products was to allow the user to develop a healthy looking tan without burning, with some usage information even advising "apply before sun-baking" so the message definitely was not based on safe sun practices. By the 1960s the concept of Sun Protection Factors (SPFs) had been developed and links between sun exposure and skin cancer were being reported, although even into the 1970s, products were still claiming that they allowed the user to tan without burning⁽¹⁾.

Over the years our knowledge of the long term harmful effects of exposure to UV radiation has increased and, combined with the launch of several new sunscreens, today's products provide broad spectrum protection allowing for high SPFs with a decent level of UVA protection. Suncare manufacturers have played a major part in educating the general public in the dangers of sun exposure and the need to avoid prolonged exposure, whilst at the same time developing well formulated sun products which are easy to apply and quickly absorbed. The importance of protecting the skin from the sun in terms of premature ageing has also come to the fore and it is widely recognised that UVA in particular leads to the early formation of wrinkles and sagging of the skin through the breakdown of collagen and elastin fibres, uneven skin tone, age spots (or solar lentigines) and capillary damage leading to increased redness⁽²⁾. All of these will appear over time as a result of chronological ageing but these processes are significantly increased by exposure to UV throughout our lifetime⁽³⁾.

For many years now we have seen UV filters used across categories such as skincare, colour cosmetics and haircare,

with many daily moisturisers now containing UVA and UVB filters and making SPF and UVA protection claims alongside anti-wrinkle, hydration etc claims. The following article takes a look at some of the recent activity in the suncare sector with regards to launches, trends, research and publications.

Textures

In the skincare category an oft-repeated mantra is that 'textures are key', how the product feels and acts on the skin is one of the key product attributes and consumer drivers. This was true even in the past when night creams were always heavier and more greasy than day creams, which tended to be lighter and more easily absorbed. Previously many brands used, for example, the same fragrance across their ranges as a 'signature', the fragrance being instantly associated with the brand in the consumer's mind. Today textures may be used in a similar way with consumers expecting a serum to have a different feel to a facial day cream which will be different to a body cream etc.

Traditionally suncare products have been perceived as being greasy, heavy, tacky and difficult to rub into the skin. This is partly historical, as many products are now available in various formats such as sprays which, in terms of skin aesthetics, perform much better. Also, as formulators have striven for higher SPFs with broad spectrum protection, the oil phase loading in products has increased, not only due to the higher levels of filter used but also the amounts of emollients needed to solubilise the filters to overcome crystallisation and ensure maximum efficacy, making it difficult to resolve this issue. Luckily with the launch of water phase filters such as BASF's Tinosorb M and Tinosorb S Aqua, along with emollients such as Cetiol B and Cetiol CC, solutions are available.

Recently we have seen many leading suncare brands including sub-ranges which specifically make claims about their textures. Examples include the Boots product range of Soltan Light and Soft Ultra-Light Textures, products delivering ultra-light skin feel which rubs in easily for a silky after-feel and the