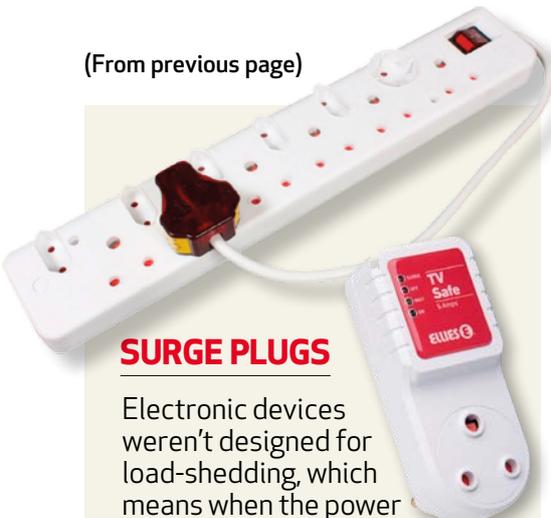


(From previous page)



SURGE PLUGS

Electronic devices weren't designed for load-shedding, which means when the power suddenly comes back on the unstable electricity supply can fry appliances such as your expensive flat-screen TV.

You could of course protect appliances by unplugging them before the power comes back on but, if you're forgetful, surge-protection plugs are for you.

These special plugs help to protect appliances because they can resist and withstand mains-induced surges. They can replace ordinary wall sockets or you can plug a surge-plug adaptor into the wall socket and use it to power ordinary plugs.

They cost between R99 (for a single) and R285 (for an eight-socket multiplug) and are distinctive because the plugs are fat and red.

Get cover

Check with your insurer that it covers damage caused to appliances by power surges after load-shedding. If you're not covered you'll have to pay out of your own pocket to repair that fancy new fridge or TV.



LIGHTS

There are various lighting kits on the market, many of which use solar power.

They vary in complexity but each basically consists of a solar panel that connects to a lamp or various bulbs. You place the solar panel in the sun and the energy it stores lights the bulbs to which it's connected.

Ellies has a solar back-up power system called the 2 Light Solar Panel Kit (pic 1) and another called the 4 Light Solar Panel Kit, which as their names suggest have enough power to light two or four LED bulbs for five to six hours when fully charged.

Other solar-light options include the Phillips Lifehome Solar Light and the Eurolux 10 W Solar Lighting Kit with four LED tube lights and cellphone charger kit.

And don't let your kids have an excuse not to do their homework. Products such as Solarway's Homework Lights (pic 2) and G1 and G2 Lanterns (pic 3) emit enough light for kids to do their homework, according to Angela Lee-Wright, general



Don't let your kids have an excuse not to do homework

manager at online eco shop Sustainable.co.za. Prices range from R169 to R436.

If you're in the habit of leaving your torches, candles and lanterns all over the place then battle to find them in the dark, consider getting a remote-controlled bulb such as the Ellies Screw or Bayonet Base LED Rechargeable Light with remote control, which you put in the place of a normal bulb. When the power goes out, hit the button on the remote and it will light up the room without you having to scramble around in the dark for a candle or lantern. These lights are now out of stock but upgraded versions should be on shelves in June.



DESKTOP COMPUTER

Smaller UPS devices can keep your desktop computer and internet running – just plug the UPS into the computer or modem. Some UPSes supply power for only 15 to 60 minutes but this gives you enough time to save your work and shut down safely. They cost between R900 and R2 700.

COOKING

You could use a generator or UPS to power your stove but any electrical appliance that needs to heat up uses a lot of electricity. A small gas stove might be a better option if you don't want to settle for sandwiches for supper. A small two-burner gas stove costs between R280 and R900.



No more sandwiches for supper

