

Sun protective hats



To protect skin and eyes from ultraviolet (UV) radiation, Cancer Council Victoria recommends hats that protect the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears.

Broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats offer the best protection from UV radiation, providing the brim is wide enough. Baseball or peaked caps and sun visors are not recommended as they leave the ears and the back of the neck exposed.

During the daily sun protection times (when the UV Index is at 3 or above) SunSmart recommends using a combination of the five sun protection measures:

1. Slip on sun-protective clothing.
2. Slop on SPF30 or higher broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen and re-apply every two hours.
3. Slap on a hat – that protects your face, head, neck and ears.
4. Seek shade.
5. Slide on sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards.

UV levels are most intense during the middle of the day. Check the SunSmart UV Alert for daily sun protection times, available as a free SunSmart app, online at sunsmart.com.au or bom.gov.au/weather/uv, in the weather section of newspapers, or as a free website widget. The sun protection times show when the UV Index is forecast to be 3 or above.

Live UV levels for capital cities are available from arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/realtime

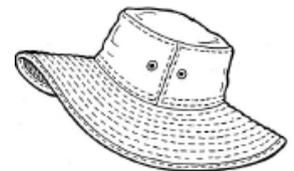
Which type of hat?

Wear a hat that provides good shade to the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears. Broad-brimmed and bucket hats provide the most UV radiation protection for the face and head. Legionnaire hats also provide good UV radiation protection. Baseball caps do not protect the head and face.¹

Wearing a hat with a brim that shades the eyes can also reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%.²

Broad-brimmed hat*

Brimms should shade the face, neck and ears.



Bucket hat*

Bucket or surfer-style hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade.



**Please see table on the next page for recommended brim width measurements according to age range and head wear size.*

Legionnaire hat

Legionnaire hats should have a flap that covers the neck. The side flap and front peak should meet to protect the side of the face.



Legionnaire hats are more suited to people who are active or doing activities involving bending.

Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck and are therefore NOT recommended.



Sun protective hats

Recommended brim width measurements

	Indicative age group	Headwear size	Broad-brimmed minimum brim width	Bucket Style minimum brim width
Children	Infants: 00 - 1 year	41cm-43cm	5cm	5cm
	Toddler: 1 - 2 years old	49cm-52cm	5cm	5cm
	3 - 8 years old	50cm-54cm	5cm	5cm
	8 - 12 years old	55cm-57cm	6cm	6cm
Adults	S/M	55cm-57cm	7.5cm	6cm
	M/L	57cm-59cm	7.5cm	6cm
	L/XL	59cm-61cm	7.5cm	6cm
	XXL	62cm-63cm	7.5cm	6cm

When choosing a hat look at:

- the quality of sun protection it offers
- the type of fabric it is made from – a tighter fabric structure is best
- the fabric's UPF label – fabric with UPF15 offers good protection while one that is UPF50 offers excellent protection. Even if the fabric is excellent, make sure the hat's overall design is effective too.
- whether it is practical (i.e. easy to keep on and doesn't interfere with activities)
- cost
- safety
- ventilation (especially if the hat is to be used during physical activity or in warmer weather).

Considerations for babies and toddlers

When choosing a hat for young children, consider the size and comfort, the amount of shade it provides and if it will obstruct vision or hearing.

Many babies and toddlers do not like to wear hats. Persistence is needed to teach them that a hat is part of their outside routine.

For babies, choose a design such as a soft legionnaire hat that will crumple easily when they put their head down.

Hats that can be adjusted at the crown or can be tied at the front to help secure it on a child's head are best. If the hat is secured with a long strap and toggle, ensure it has a safety snap, place the strap at the back of their head or trim the length so it doesn't become a choking hazard.

Hat accessories

Sun protection accessories such as broad-brim attachments or legionnaire-style covers are available for workers who are required to use a helmet or hard hat.

There are also attachments for cyclists to provide protection while wearing their helmet.

Further information and resources

Visit sunsmart.com.au or contact the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

UV-protective clothing and accessories can be purchased at Cancer Council Victoria's shop or online at cancervic.org.au/store.

References

- 1 Gies P, Javorniczky J, Roy C, Henderson S, Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency. Measurements of the UVR protection provided by hats used at school. *Photochemistry & Photobiology* 2006;82:750-4.
- 2 Rosenthal FS, West SK, Muñoz B, Emmett EA, Strickland PT, Taylor HR. Ocular and facial skin exposure to ultraviolet radiation in sunlight: a personal exposure model with application to a worker population. *Health Physics* 1991;61(1):77-86.

This information is based on current available evidence at the time of review. It can be photocopied for distribution.

Latest update: June 2014