

# 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-style 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. When the UV Index is at 3 or above use a combination of the five sun protection measures:

1. Slip on some sun-protective clothing.
2. Slop on SPF30+ 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 some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards.

Sun protection is required when the UV is 3 and above – UV levels are most intense during the middle of the day.

To find out UV Index levels look for the SunSmart UV Alert in your daily newspaper's weather section or visit [bom.gov.au/weather/uv](http://bom.gov.au/weather/uv) or [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au)

Live UV levels for capital cities are available from [arpansa.gov.au/uvindex/realtime](http://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-style hats also provide good UV radiation protection. Baseball caps do not protect the head and face.<sup>1</sup>

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

### **Broad-brimmed hat**

Brim should be **at least 7.5 cm** wide.



The brim width for children under 10 years of age should be suitable for the size of their head and ensure that their face is well shaded. It is recommended the brim be at least 6 cm.

### **Bucket hat**

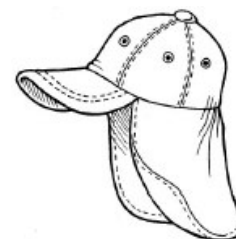
Bucket or surfer-style hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be **at least 6 cm** and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade.



The brim width on bucket hats for pre-school-aged children should be suitable for the size of their head and shade their face well (minimum of 5 cm as a guide).

### **Legionnaire-style hat**

Legionnaire-style 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-style 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

## 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)
- fashion trends (so that the wearer chooses the hat over less protective ones)
- cost
- safety
- ventilation (especially if the hat is to be used during physical activity or in warmer weather).

## Special 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-style 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

*Being SunSmart in Victoria* information sheet.

Visit [sunsmart.com.au](http://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](http://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.**

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