Sun protective hats

To protect skin and eyes from ultraviolet (UV) damage, wear a hat that protects the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears.

Broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats offer the best protection from UV radiation. Baseball or peaked caps and sun visors are not recommended, as these styles do not protect the ears, cheeks or neck.

For best protection during the daily sun protection times (when the UV level is 3 or higher) use all five SunSmart steps:

- Slip on clothing
- Slop on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- Slap on a hat
- Seek shade
- Slide on sunglasses.

The free SunSmart app tells you the sun protection times for your location and provides current UV levels. Sun protection times can also be found at the Bureau of Meteorology website and app and live UV levels are also available from ARPANSA.

Which type of hat?
Wear a hat that provides good shade to the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears. A broad-brimmed hat can also reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%.¹

Broad-brimmed and bucket hats provide the most protection for the face and head. Legionnaire hats also provide good protection. Baseball caps do not protect the cheeks, ears and neck and are not recommended.²

Recommended brim width measurements³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicative age group</th>
<th>Headwear size</th>
<th>Broad-brimmed minimum brim width</th>
<th>Bucket style minimum brim width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants 0–1 year</td>
<td>41–43cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler 1–2 years</td>
<td>49–52cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–8 years</td>
<td>50–54cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–12 years</td>
<td>55–57cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/M</td>
<td>55–57cm</td>
<td>7.5cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/L</td>
<td>57–59cm</td>
<td>7.5cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L/XL</td>
<td>59–61cm</td>
<td>7.5cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXL</td>
<td>62–63cm</td>
<td>7.5cm</td>
<td>6cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Greater than 56cm circumference
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When choosing a hat look at:
- the quality of sun protection it offers
- whether it is practical (i.e. easy to keep on and doesn’t interfere with activities)
- safety
- ventilation (especially if the hat is to be used during physical activity or in warmer weather).

UPF
The ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating refers to both the design of the hat and the material it is made from.

To claim or display a UPF rating, hats are required to provide good sun protection such as a bucket, broad-brimmed or legionnaire hat (AS/NZS 4399:2017). Alternative hat designs providing protection and shading at the crown, face, ears and neck are also acceptable.

Caps and sun-visors cannot claim or display a UPF rating.

The UPF rating also provides information on how much UV will pass through unstretched, dry material. For example, material with a UPF rating of 20 would only allow 1/20th (5%) of UV falling on its surface to pass through it, blocking 95% of UV. Any fabric rated above UPF15 provides minimum protection against UV but UPF50+ is recommended.

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. It is also helpful if adults role model sun protective behaviours.

For babies, choose a design such as a soft bucket 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 that provide protection while wearing a helmet.

More information and resources
Visit sunsmart.com.au or contact the Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

UV-protective clothing and accessories can be purchased at Cancer Council Victoria’s shop or online at www.cancercouncilshop.org.au.

References

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

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