



# Sun-protective hats

To help protect your skin and eyes from UV damage, wear a broad-brim, bucket or legionnaire hat that shades the face, neck, eyes and ears.

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the main cause of skin cancer.

Sun protection is recommended whenever the UV level reaches 3 or above.

Download the free SunSmart app or visit [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) to check what times you need to use sun protection each day.

During the sun protection times, protect yourself in five ways:

1. Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
2. Slap on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you go outdoors and re-apply every two hours.
3. Slap on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, head, neck and ears.
4. Seek shade.
5. Slide on sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard for UV protection.

## Which type of hat?

The best sun-protective hats shade the head, face, neck and ears. Because caps and visors do not protect the ears, cheeks or neck they are not considered suitable for sun protection.

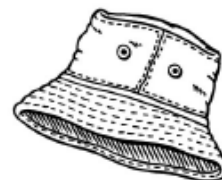
### Broad-brimmed hat

Brim should be wide and flat and create shade for the face, neck and ears.



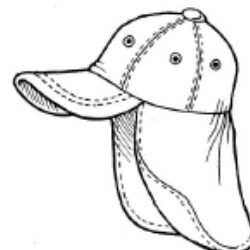
### Bucket hat

Bucket 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.



### Legionnaire hat

Legionnaire hats should have a flap that covers the ears and back of the neck to the collarbone/shoulder. The side flap and front peak should overlap to protect the side of the face.



Recommended hat brim width measurements <sup>1,2</sup>				
Indicative age group	Head-wear size	Minimum brim width		
		Broad-brimmed hat	Bucket hat	Legionnaire hat
<b>Children</b>				
Infants 0–1 year	41–43cm	5cm	5cm	Proportional to the child's head/face
Toddler 1–2 years	49–52cm	5cm	5cm	Proportional to the child's head/face
3–8 years	50–54cm	5cm	5cm	6cm
8–12 years	55–56cm	6cm	6cm	6cm
<b>Adults</b>				
S/M	56–57cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
M/L	57–59cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
L/XL	59–61cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm
XXL	62–63cm	7.5cm	6cm	7.5cm

## 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 (how much of the head it protects) and the material it is made from (how much UV it blocks).

To claim or display a UPF rating, hat designs must protect the face, head, ears and neck. Sun protective hat styles that meet UPF rating guidelines include bucket, broad-brim or legionnaire hats (AS 4399:2020). Alternative hat designs providing protection and shading at the crown, face, ears and neck are also acceptable.<sup>2</sup>

Caps and sun-visors cannot claim or display a UPF rating as they do not provide adequate coverage.

The UPF rating also provides information on how much UV will pass through unstretched, dry material. There are only four UPF ratings for hats: UPF15, 30, 50 or 50+. Hat material with a UPF rating of 30 would only allow 1/30th (3.3%) of UV falling on its surface to pass through it, blocking 96.7% of UV. Any fabric rated above UPF15 provides minimum protection against UV. UPF50 and UPF50+ (excellent protection) are recommended.

## Considerations for babies and toddlers

When choosing a hat for young children, consider:

- the size and comfort
- the amount of shade it provides
- if it will obstruct vision or hearing
- safety.

Hats that can be adjusted at the crown 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 the head or trim the length so it doesn't become a choking hazard.

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 fabric and design such as a soft bucket hat that will crumple easily when they put their head down.

## 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

For more information, visit [sunsmart.com.au](https://sunsmart.com.au) or contact Cancer Council on 13 11 20.

For more information about how to protect your skin, visit [sunsmart.com.au/protect-your-skin](https://sunsmart.com.au/protect-your-skin).

Certain health conditions and medications mean some people are more sensitive to UV radiation and always need to use sun protection regardless of the UV levels. For more information, visit [sunsmart.com.au/skin-cancer/risk-factors-for-skin-cancer](https://sunsmart.com.au/skin-cancer/risk-factors-for-skin-cancer).

## 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. Standards Australia. Australian Standard AS 4399:2020 Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification, 17 April 2020.

Last updated: July 2022