



Sun protective hats

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

Broad-brim, 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 is 3 and above) 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-brim hat can also reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%.¹

Broad-brim 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.^{2,3}

Broad-brim hat

Brims should shade the face, neck and ears.



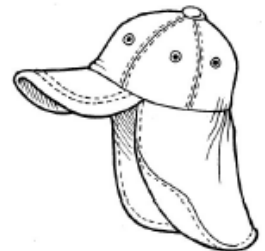
Bucket hat

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.



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^{2,3}

		Minimum brim width		
Indicative age group	Head-wear size	Broad-brim hat	Bucket hat	Legionnaire hat
Children				
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
Adults				
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 should 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.³

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 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 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

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 Standards Australia. Australian Standard AS 4399:2020 Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification, 17 April 2020.

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

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