

Sun Protective Hats

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Each year over 950,000 non-melanoma skin cancers are treated in Australia, and around 12,000 melanomas are diagnosed. More than 2,000 people die from skin cancer each year. The major cause of skin cancer is overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, particularly during childhood and adolescence. UV radiation has been identified as a known carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

To protect the skin and eyes from UV radiation, Cancer Council Western Australia recommends wearing a hat that shades the face, back of the neck, eyes and ears. These areas are common sites for both skin damage and skin cancers. Wearing a hat with a brim that shades the eyes can reduce UV radiation to the eyes by 50%.

When the UV Index is 3 or above, hats should be used with other forms of sun protection including:

- Using shade.
- Wearing protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Applying SPF 30 or higher broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside, then reapplying every 2 hours.
- Wearing sunglasses to protect your eyes. Close fitting, wrap-around styles are best.

Which type of hat?

Cancer Council WA recommends wearing a hat that provides good shade to the face, back of the neck and ears when outdoors.

Broad-brimmed hats should have a brim at least **7.5cm** wide for adults and **6cm** wide for children. A broad-brimmed hat that provides good shade can considerably reduce the exposure of UV radiation to the face.

Bucket hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be **at least 6cm** for adults and **5cm** for children and provide the face, neck and ears with good protection from the sun.

Legionnaire style hats should have a flap that covers the neck and meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face.

Baseball caps and sun visors are **NOT** recommended as they leave the ears and back of the neck exposed.

Choose a hat with a closely woven fabric. When you hold the hat to the light, ideally no light should be seen through the fabric. If you can see light coming through it, some UV radiation will also get through

