

Hats

Skin cancer rates are higher in Australia than anywhere else in the world, with one out of two people developing some form of skin cancer in their life. The major cause of skin cancer is exposure to the ultraviolet rays (UVR) of the sun over many years. Up to 70% of Australians have detectable sun damage of the skin by the age of 14 years. Research highlights skin protection, particularly in the first 18 years of life, as a major strategy in the fight against skin cancer.

Common sites of skin damage and skin cancer are the neck, ears, temples, lips, face and nose. These areas are constantly exposed to the elements and therefore, generally receive more UVR than other body parts.

Why hats?

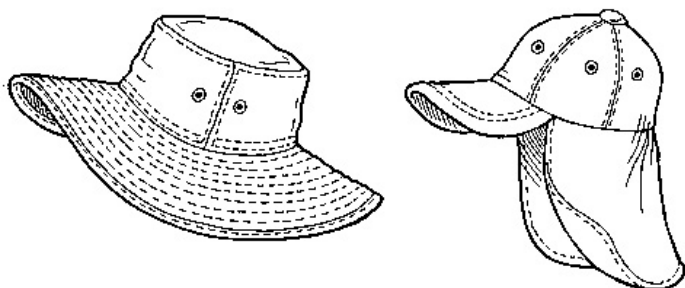
The effect of UVR accumulates over the years, affecting the deeper layers of the skin. Skin cancer depends on total exposure, and the greater the exposure the higher the risk of skin cancer. It is never too late to start protecting the skin.

Population surveys over the past decade have shown that approximately 80% of South Australians report that they have skin that burns when exposed to sunlight for half an hour without protection. Their skin is not suited to coping with the harsh Australian sunlight.

Wearing a hat is one strategy that is recommended by The Cancer Council South Australia to protect the face, back of the neck and ears from overexposure to UVR. It is recommended that hats are used in combination with other forms of sun protection practices like seeking shade, wearing closely woven clothing with long sleeves and applying SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen.

Which hats?

The Cancer Council South Australia recommends wearing hats that shade the face, back of neck and ears when in the sun. These include broad brimmed and legionnaire hats made of closely woven material.



Brims on broad brimmed hats should be 8-10cm wide. These hats reduce the amount of ultraviolet radiation reaching the face and eyes by up to 50%.

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

Hard hats can have flaps or extra brims fitted.

If your work involves a lot of bending, it is a good idea to have a flap on the back of broad brimmed hats.

Legionnaire style covers can be fitted to bicycle helmets to provide protection for cyclists.

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

Ventilation should be a consideration if the hat will be used while exercising.

Stylish, fashionable hats that meet The Cancer Council requirements are now widely available

Why wear your hat all year round?

There is a misconception that damage to the skin from ultraviolet radiation(UVR) from sunlight only occurs if there is sunburn. The effects of the sun on skin are cumulative so damage is building up even without sunburn. This damage can lead to skin cancer later in life.

Although UVR levels are lower in winter than in summer, skin damage can still occur. Australia's UV levels are higher than those of Europe and North America due to its geographic location. On a clear winter's day the UVR could be as high as those on a summer's day in northern Europe.

UVR cannot be seen or felt and the intensity of such radiation is not related to air temperature. UVR can be as intense on a clear day of 24oC as one of 39oC. People often get sunburnt on a cooler day because they tend to stay out in the direct sun for longer rather than seeking shade as on a hot day.

For more information contact the:

[Cancer Helpline 13 11 20](tel:131120)

The Cancer Council South Australia
202 Greenhill Rd, Eastwood SA 5063
PO Box 929, Unley SA 5061

Telephone: (08) 8291 4111
1800 188 070 country callers

Fax: (08) 8291 4122

Email: tcc@cancersa.org.au

MAKE **SLIP! SLOP! SLAP!** A NATURAL PART OF YOUR DAY.