

The Sun and Your Child

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun during childhood and adolescence is a major risk factor for the development of skin cancer and eye damage. Babies are especially vulnerable to sunburn and skin damage.

Sun protection tips

Time of year and time of day

- UV radiation is strongest in the middle of the day. Plan to be outdoors before 10am or after 3pm, especially from September to May.
- In Australia, UV radiation is extreme in November, December, January and February. During these months, UV radiation is still high before 10am and after 3pm.
- Remember UV radiation is not only a danger on hot sunny days. It is there on cloudy days, in winter and on cool days. You can't see or feel UV radiation but it's always around—it is just the level that varies, so keep an eye on the UV index on the weather report.
- UV radiation is lower in the middle of the year, however skin damage can still occur with prolonged sun exposure. In June, the lowest risk month, you and your child can enjoy up to 1 hour unprotected in the sun during peak UV. (This does not relate to areas north of Geraldton where UV radiation is high all year round).

Use shade

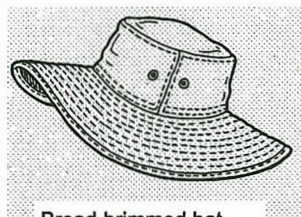
- Encourage children to play in shaded areas. If good natural shade that provides a complete shadow, is unavailable consider a permanent or portable shade structure.
- Provide shade for prams, strollers and play areas.
- Be aware that shade does not provide 100% protection.

SunSmart clothing

- Get kids into the habit of wearing clothes, with a closely woven fabric, that cover a lot of skin and are loose enough to allow airflow.
- At the beach or pool, children can wear sun protective swimsuits with an ultraviolet protection factor UPF of 50+, a hat and sunglasses. These swimsuits cover more skin than traditional bathers and retain their sun protective qualities when wet. Alternatively children can wear shirts and shorts over traditional bathers. Although these fabrics when wet, may not provide as much protection, they will provide more protection than a sunscreen. SPF 50+ sunscreen can generally be applied to skin not covered by clothing.

Slap on a SunSmart hat

- Make sure children always wear a SunSmart hat (broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style). Baseball caps and sun visors are NOT considered SunSmart as they leave the ears and back of the neck exposed (these are sites where skin cancer commonly occurs).
- Broad brimmed hats should have brims of at least 7.5cms. A broad brimmed hat that provides good shade can considerably reduce sun exposure to the face. The brim width for children under 10 should be proportional to the size of the child's head and ensure their face is well shaded.



Broad-brimmed hat

CANCER INFORMATION



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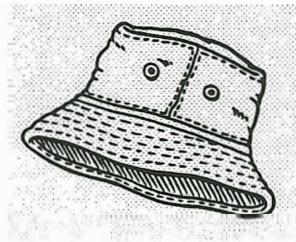
Helpline

13 11 20

TTY (08) 9381 6562

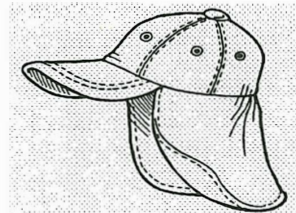
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- Bucket or surfie style hats should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be at least 6cm and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade. The brim width on bucket hats for pre-school aged children should be proportional to the size of the child's head ensuring their face is sufficiently shaded (minimum of 5cm as a rough guide).



Bucket or surfie hat

- 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.



Legionnaire hat

Slop on sunscreen

- Sunscreens should be used as a last line of defence and should only be applied to those areas of skin that can not be protected by clothing. Generally, sunscreens are safe to use on babies if you can not avoid being in the sun. A patch test on a small area of skin is recommended to check for any allergies or reactions to a particular brand of sunscreen.
- Look for SPF 50+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreens that have a valid expiry date.
- While swimming if you are concerned about sunscreen making your child slippery, remember to hold your child around the waist or an area covered by clothing.

Sunglasses

- Sunglasses are available for children and babies. Check the swing tag for the Australian Standard number or an EPF 10+ to ensure that the sunglasses block out UV radiation.

Be a good role model

- Demonstrate good sun protective behaviour yourself. This will protect you from the sun and you will also be a good role model for your children.

Make sun protection part of your family's routine and your children will develop good habits early.

**Is your child's school SunSmart?
Contact The Cancer Council Western Australia on
(08) 9212 4333 to find out how to become a SunSmart School.**