

What you need to know about skin cancer

How can hats prevent skin cancer?

Many skin cancers occur on the face, neck, and ears. A well designed hat can shield you from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. By wearing an appropriate hat, you can reduce your risk of disfiguring skin cancer.

Why should I worry about skin cancer?

One in seven people in the United States gets skin cancer. Of those cases, one in 100 are melanoma, which can be fatal.

Skin cancer is more common if you are

- fair or light-skinned,
- have a family history of certain moles, or
- spend a lot of time outdoors in the sun, whether for work, sport, or leisure.

Are all skin cancers the same?

No, there are three types:

- Basal cell (75 percent of all skin cancers).
- Squamous cell (20 percent of skin cancers).
- Melanoma (5 percent of skin cancers that cause 75 percent of all skin cancer deaths).

The steady increase in the incidence of melanoma (4 percent each year since 1973), suggests we need to make better use of hats, other clothing, and sunscreen lotions to protect skin from the sun. With early identification and treatment, survival rates increase. Ninety-nine percent of basal cell and squamous cell cancers are curable. The five-year survival rate for melanoma, if found early, is 85 percent.

Monitor your moles

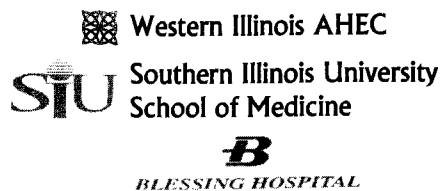
Most moles are harmless, but learn your ABCD's to be alert for melanoma, the most serious skin cancer. Melanoma might be suspected when a mole has:

- A -Asymmetry: One half does not match the other
- B -Border irregularity: The outside edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.
- C -Color variation: The skin pigment is not uniform, but shades of tan, brown, and black or red, white, and blue.
- D -Diameter: Greater than 6 millimeters (about ¼-inch) with any sudden or continuing increase in size.

Make it a habit to ...

- Examine your skin carefully, front and back in a mirror every 6 to 8 weeks. Take note of any changes in your skin.
- Watch for sores that won't heal, red patches, and changes in size or color of moles. These may be warning signs of skin cancer.
- Consult your doctor for regular checkups and any time you are in doubt.
- Use suntan lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) rating of at least 15.
- Wear a hat and other clothing to shelter yourself from the sun.

Support for this program is provided by:



Is it time to change your hat?

Hat styles differ in their ability to shade your face and protect you from sun. As we better understand the relationship between sun exposure and skin cancer, hat design takes on new importance.

Western Illinois

Agri-Health Program

**Located at:
East Adams County Rural
Health Clinic**

102 Prairie Mills Road
Golden, IL 62339
(217) 696-4446

How to select a sun-safe hat

Hats that shade the neck, ears, and face are widely available in stores. One hat design may not have all the features listed, and some features are mutually exclusive, or some features may be more important to you than others. If you wear a baseball-style cap most of the time now, however, it may be time to change your hat. By selecting an appropriate hat and wearing it regularly while in the sun, you can cut your risk of skin cancer.

Style

Hats vary in the shape and width of the brim. Narrower brims offer less shade and protection. As you think about hat styles, choose a style compatible with your work and activities.

Size

Hat styles are available in set sizes, adjustable fit sizes, or "one-size-fits-all." Baseball caps shade the eyes and size can be adjusted easily, but they do not shade the neck, ears, and face.

Fabric

Some materials let more air through than others. A closely woven canvas or other material needs air vents/eyelets to make the hat cooler to wear in heat. Sea-grass or straw hats may not need vents because of their open weave, but they may not screen sun as well, either. Sunlight can penetrate many lightweight or open-weave materials.

Key design features

As you consider a new hat, ask yourself these questions:

Does the hat have ...

- a wide brim (3 inches or more)?
- a design that does not interfere with side vision?
- vents in the crown for air flow?
- an inside sweat band that's comfortable?
- a secure fit to stay on your head?
- a chin strap?
- an extended flap to cover your neck?

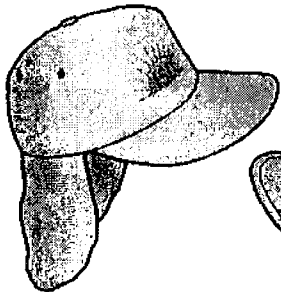
Is the hat made with a ...

- material that will block UV-a and UV-b rays?
- light color to reflect light?
- dark lining under the brim to reduce eye-strain?
- crushable, resilient material?

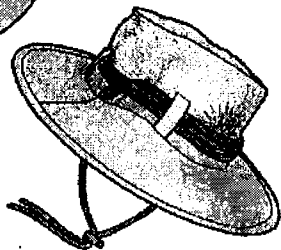
Is the hat style ...

- practical for your work or other activities?
- lightweight and comfortable to wear?
- priced reasonably?
- attractive in appearance?

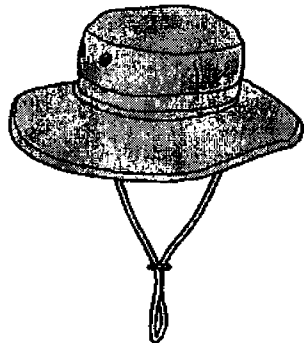
Alternative Hat Styles



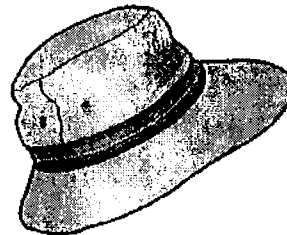
Backflap: A size-adjustable cap with an attached flap shields neck and ears.



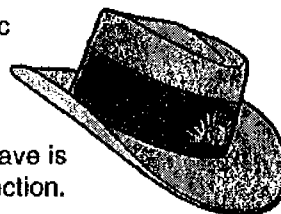
Outback: This canvas hat has a wide brim and chin strap.



Booney: This lightweight fabric hat has a dark lining under brim to reduce eye strain.



Suncrusher™: Eyelets allow air flow; front brim is wider than back brim.



Tropical straw: Open weave is cool and has some sun protection.

Common hat measurements

(measure around your head)

If your head measures ...	your hat size is ...	and is considered
21½-21¾ inches	6¾-7	Small
22¼-22⅝ inches	7⅛-7¼	Medium
23-23½ inches	7⅜-7½	Large
23⅞-24¼ inches	7⅝-7¾	Extra-large