

# Sun Protection with Clothing & Hats

## Cover up!

Almost all clothing provides some protection against ultraviolet (UV) rays. The material acts as a physical block to prevent UV rays from reaching the skin. The higher the sun protection factor (SPF) of material, the better the protection.

- Loose fitting, long sleeved shirts and long pants provide the best protection.
- Closely woven and dark coloured materials offer better protection. The more light that is blocked by the material, the more UV protection it will provide.
- Keep in mind that the ability of the fabric to block out UV rays is reduced when it becomes wet and transparent.
- The approximate SPF of dry clothing:

Cotton denim (jean material)	SPF 1700
Polyester/lycra blend (surf shirt)	SPF 35
Cotton/polyester t-shirt	SPF 15
Basic cotton t-shirt	SPF 7



## Keep Your Hat On!

In addition to sunscreen, hats can provide excellent protection for your face and neck, which are often left “undressed” and overexposed to UV radiation.

- Choose a hat that you like.
- Choose a hat with a 7.5 cm/3 inch brim that goes all the way around to protect neck and ears. This will provide SPF 20 to the forehead, SPF 7 to the nose and SPF 5 to the cheeks.
- A hat or a baseball cap with a neck protector/flap is recommended to provide protection for the neck area and the ears.
- A hat made of closely woven material (denim, polyester) that blocks out sunlight will shield against UV rays.



Don't forget to apply a sunscreen containing UVA and UVB protection, with an SPF of 15 or more, on all areas of the skin exposed to the sun and reapply every two hours. Sunglasses should also be worn to protect your eyes. One severe sunburn during childhood doubles the risk of developing skin cancer. Practising sun safety can greatly lower the risk of developing skin cancer later in life.



Adapted from Canadian Dermatology Association, Sun Facts, 1994.

**For more information on Sun Safety, call  
Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.**

