

STANDOUT SUNWEAR
PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY

What to look for in Sunwear!

How to choose the right sun-smart rash vests
to protect your skin from the harsh summer rays.

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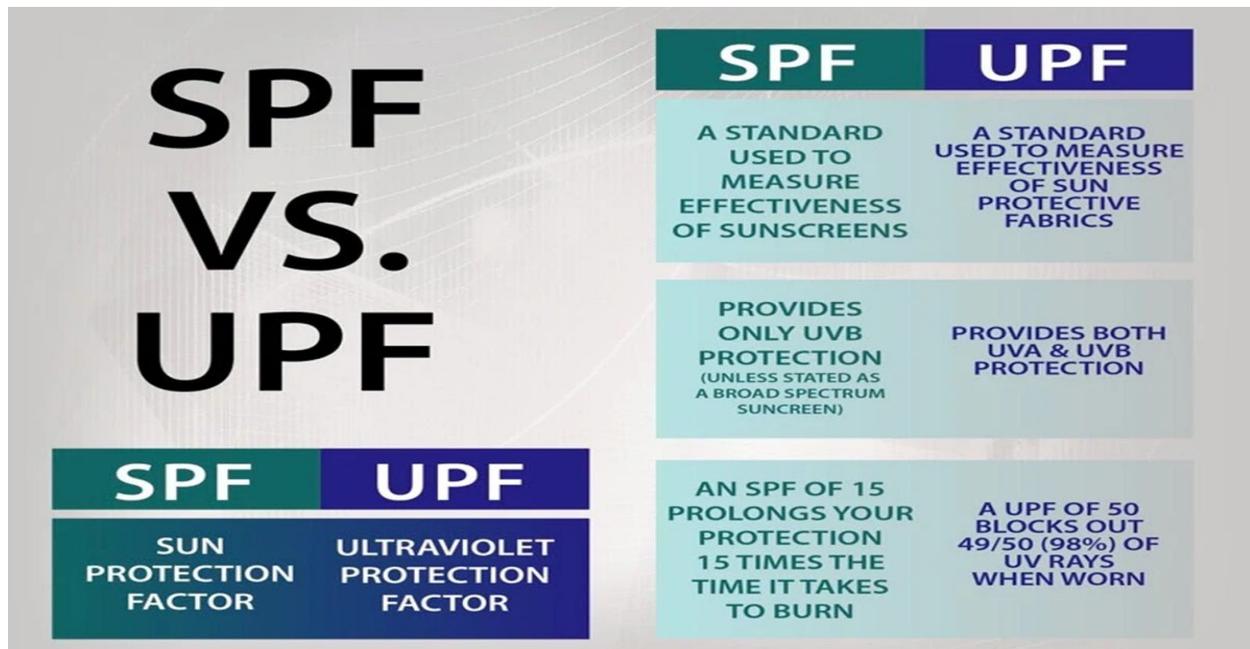
INTRODUCTION

Whenever you hit the beach or the pool in summer, sun protection is a must. With very few kids willing to submit to full-body sunscreen coverage, UV-protective clothing like a rash vest, or 'Rashie', can be an absolute blessing – back, front and shoulders covered in one easy step.

But Rashies don't last forever, and the ravages of sun, chlorine, washing and stretching will diminish their sun protection over time – as the various warnings and disclaimers on the labels remind you.

This Rashie guide will help you decide on the best Rashie to buy by explaining:

- ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) and how it's measured
- how to know if a Rashie is doing its job properly
- how to care for a Rashie and when to replace it.



WHAT IS UPF?

Ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) is a measure applied to fabrics that tells you how much of the sun's UV radiation is blocked, and therefore how much protection it gives. A UPF of 50 lets 1/50 or two percent of UV radiation penetrate, whereas a UPF of five lets one-fifth or 20% of UV radiation through.

The UPF of a material can be affected by:

- its thickness – denim protects better than organza
- the tightness of the weave – and stretching can reduce this
- the colour – darker and intense bright colours give more protection than light ones
- the fibre – all other things being equal, synthetic materials give more protection than natural fibres
- the addition of UV-absorbing finishing chemicals or optical brighteners
- moisture – dry fabric often has a higher UPF than wet fabric.

The Australian standard for UPF measurement is AS 4399:2020 Sun protective clothing - Evaluation and classification. This standard was first introduced in 1996 to guide manufacturers and suppliers in communicating the sun protection properties of materials in products such as swimwear, workwear, school wear and outdoor wear to Australians and New Zealanders.

It was revised in 2017 to simplify the UPF rating system and introduce body coverage information. It was revised again in 2020 to include body coverage and labelling information.

KEY FINDINGS

Is your Sunwear working?

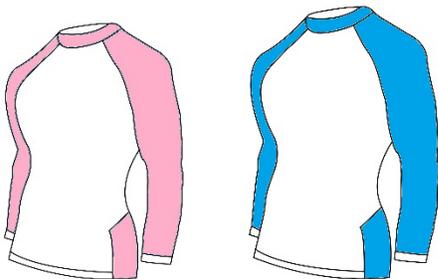


If you're wearing a Rashie and not getting sunburnt, you may think it's doing its job. And it probably is – against the burning UVB radiation, at least. In general, fabrics give more protection against UVB than UVA, so an absence of sunburn doesn't tell you whether it's giving effective protection against UVA – and that's the radiation most responsible for premature ageing of skin. It also causes skin cancer, including melanoma, as does UVB.

An absence of sunburn doesn't tell you whether it's giving effective protection against UVA.

Visible signs that your Rashie may not be protecting you properly are a slackening of the fabric and loss of its shape. When it's wet is a good time to check for excessive stretching and transparency. Ultimately, it's better to be safe than sorry, and buy and replace rashies regularly – and the good news is they don't have to be expensive to be effective.

How long does Sunwear last?



We wanted to see just how well rashies stood up over time, so in 2016, we tested a Rashie that a child had worn over a period of three to four years. The rash vest had endured a battering in chlorine pools and at the beach, and although it was usually rinsed, it was rarely washed. The material showed signs of wear (see image) and had lost elasticity in patches.

This Rashie was rated UPF 20 after taking the worst patches into account, which still puts it in the 'good' category for protection. So, although a new Rashie is better, it's good to know that even a well-worn Rashie is going to do an OK job if you don't have another option – and some protection is better than none when it comes to Australia's harsh summer sun.

For comparison, a thin white cotton T-shirt has a UPF of about five.

We surveyed 321 Voice Your Choice members about their buying, use and care of rashies for kids. We were particularly interested to know how long rashies were used for and found that while many kids only wore a Rashie for one summer or a year (57%), outgrown tops that still had some wear in them tended to get passed down to other family members, friends or a charity collection – only 25% were thrown away – so a particular top could potentially be used for several years.

When it comes to care instructions, many members found the Rashie care instructions confusing and hard to follow. While instructions vary from top to top, all those we bought say you should rinse immediately after use, and not tumble dry. Almost half (49%) said they always or often rinsed them in fresh water immediately after use, and 89% said they never tumble dried them.

Care Instructions

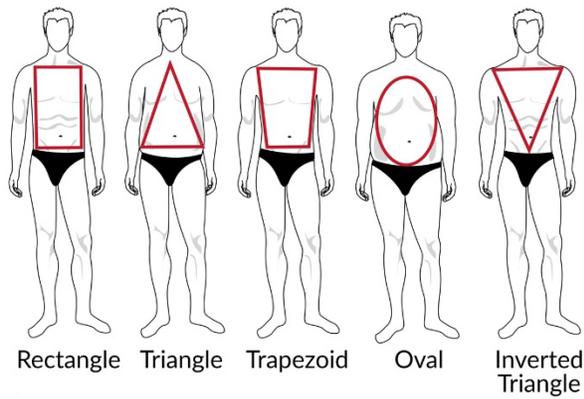


For something that's probably going to be worn in salt water, chlorine and freshwater, in the sun and on the sand, by the children of harried parents, the care instructions can be pretty demanding.

- Most labels point out that you should rinse the rashies after use, but fresh water may not be available.
- Rolling them up when wet or wrapping them in a towel isn't usually recommended.
- Most UPF-rated garments recommend a gentle machine wash or even handwashing. But this will depend on the garment, so check the care instructions on the label first.
- Rashies should be line-dried in the shade.

We understand parents may not always strictly follow the care instructions – our advice is just to do your best!

Sunwear Fit



Get to know your body shape and your loved ones by measuring and identifying the shapes from the above men's shape types. Women's body types are identical to the men's.

Please consider your body shape as any stretching of the Sunwear material will impact on its ability to protect against the sun.

A handy tip is to always add an inch or 2.54 cm to your body measurements to increase Sunwear longevity!



Safety/Security Benefit

Darker colours and black provide better UV protection than pale colours. Bright colours are also good and makes it easier to spot your child!

In our perfect world all families have easily identifiable Sunwear so the whole community can watch over all the children!!



CONCLUSION

Here are our key takeaways from the consumer report.

Key Takeaways

- **Fit.** Make sure they're a relaxed fit, especially across the shoulders, because stretching the material reduces UPF. If they're too big, however, they become difficult to swim in and uncomfortable when wet. **HAVE YOUR SUNWEAR CUSTOM MADE!**
- **Style.** Get one with a high neckline, a zip makes it easier to get on and off. and long sleeves provide more protection than short sleeves.
- **Colour.** Darker and intense bright colours provide more protection than light ones.
- **Care.** Rinse the Sun Shirts in fresh water after use. Don't roll them up when wet or wrap them in a towel. A gentle machine wash or even handwashing in cool to warm water. Line-dry in the shade.
- **Security.** Add a level of security to your outdoor activities by having your family dressed in the same colored Sunwear. **CUSTOM DESIGN YOUR SUNWEAR.**