Face the facts

Children's faces are exposed to UV radiation every day of their lives so it's not surprising to learn the ears, temples, lips and nose are among the most common places for skin cancer to develop later in life. Unfortunately Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world, with two in every three people who grow up here developing some form before the age of 70. The good news however, is that skin cancer is almost totally preventable.

Did you know that a sun-safe hat can protect those vulnerable areas as well as reduce the amount of UV radiation reaching children's eyes by as much as 50%? There are many styles of hats, but how can you be sure a hat will provide the best sun protection?

A simple way to choose a sun-safe hat is to look for one made of closely woven fabric - if you can see through it, UV radiation will get through! Check out the UV Protection Factor (UPF) on the label. This is a scale which rates how much UV protection a fabric provides, and the higher the number, the better the protection.

Cancer Council recommends that children and adults wear a sun-safe hat whenever they are outside including excursions and play sessions. Baseball caps are not recommended as they simply don't provide enough protection especially for the nose, ears and back of the neck.

Sometimes children refuse to wear their sun-safe hat so services might provide spare sun-safe hats or offer play in well shaded areas so children continue to play safely.

Sun-safe hats can be:

- Broad-brimmed with a rim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm)
- Bucket style with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm)
- Legionnaire, where the peak and the back flap meet at the side.

What about head lice?

Parents are often concerned about head lice living in hats and risks associated with hat sharing. In fact head lice need blood to survive, and without it they dehydrate in 6-24 hours. The eggs need warmth to hatch which is why they are laid close to the scalp. The further they are away from the scalp, the less likely they are to survive.

Girls Night In is a great excuse to catch up with your girlfriends and raise money and awareness of women's cancers. Every day 46 Australian women are diagnosed with a breast or gynaecological cancer. You can make a difference by getting involved in Girls Night In.

Time spent with girlfriends is special and if you miss them, chances are they miss you too! So if you’re busy with family, work, and other commitments Girls Night In is the perfect excuse to celebrate friendship and support a good cause. Maybe consider hosting a Girls Night In at your service or in your home.

Visit the website, www.girlsnighitin.com.au or call 1300 65 65 85 to register and become an event host or make a donation.