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Underwear for Children

Buymanship Series

Extension Pamphlet 221

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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE • UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Running, climbing, and jumping make up the day's activities for most children. Because of these activities underwear should be simple and comfortable. Pants and shirts are standard underwear items for both boys and girls.

The standard fabric for most pants and shirts is cotton knit or cotton blended with nylon or polyester. Knits are soft next to the skin, fit snugly without bunching, absorb perspiration, and allow for ventilation. Knits are durable, easy to launder, and inexpensive.

Researchers have tested 33 brands of cotton knit T-shirts that were not marked "shrinkage controlled" and found they shrank from 4 to 35 percent. Shirts that shrank the least had even, round, plump knitted loops. Shirts that shrank and changed drastically had been made of fabrics with long thin loops and uneven thin places in the knit.

When shopping look for a label that tells that the knit garment has been shrinkage controlled and "will not shrink more than 1 percent in the lengthwise."

A child's body measurements rather than age determines size. Two children of the same age may have entirely different measurements.

SIZE

Boys	Measure around chest, well up under arms, and over tips of shoulder blades. Measure over underwear at smallest part of waist. Hold tape measure snug but not tight.
Girls	Measure chest around fullest part. Hold tape snugly over shoulder blades. Measure around smallest part of natural waistline with belt removed.

Sizes in the table are taken from the U. S. Body Measurement Standard; however, not all manufacturers conform to this standard. The same standard of measurements is used for boys and girls through size 6.

Boy's Size	2	4	6
Chest	21	22 -23	24 -25
Waist	20½	21 -21½	22 -22½

Boy's Size	8	10	12
Chest	25¾-26½	27¼-28	28¾-29½
Waist	23 -23½	24 -24½	25 -25½

Girl's Size	7	8	10	12	14
Chest	26	27	29	30½	32
Waist	23	23½	24½	25½	26½

If a child's measurements fall between sizes, buy the larger size.

MATERIALS

Mercerized cotton — treatment that makes cotton stronger, more lustrous, and more absorbent.

Pima cotton — fine, extra-long staple cotton.

Cotton reinforced with nylon for longer wear.

Cotton blended with stretch nylon (usually about 50 percent cotton, 50 percent nylon).

Cotton blended with polyester (usually about 50 percent cotton, 50 percent polyester) for wrinkle resistance and longer wear.

STYLES

Boys

T-shirt — has sleeves and close fitting ribbed neckline.

Slip-on shirt — has sleeves and overlapping easy-on shoulder.

Athletic shirt — is sleeveless and has lowered neckline in front and back.

Brief — webbed elastic waistband and knitted cuffs.

Girls

T-shirt — same as boys.

Slip-on shirt — same as boys.

Vest — similar to boy's athletic shirt.

Panty—brief style with webbed elastic waistband and narrow elastic or knitted cuff; dressy style colored, printed, trimmed, or ruffled.

Swirling petticoats are made from nylon taffeta with net and lace used for ruffling. Built-up or wide shoulder straps are better than narrow straps. An elasticized back bodice or elasticized side panels are good features for fit and growth.

Slip—moderately priced slips of cotton percale, plissé, or polished cottons are available. Slips of durable press cotton and polyester blend or nylon tricot are somewhat more expensive.

The petticoat or half slip may not stay up well for the girl who does not have a well-defined waistline.

WINTER

Children may change to long-sleeved, long-legged underwear for winter. It is available in thermal knits to provide warmth without weight. Firm knit rib cuffs are needed at the wrist and ankles. Knitted tights for girls in run-proof stretch nylon are gay and colorful. They provide a little protection from cold for both play and dressup occasions.

TIMESAVER

When children are about the same age or size, mark each child's underwear when it's new. Different colored yarns for each child make sorting after laundering an easy job. Mark the shirts and pants in front so the young child can tell the difference.

MONEYSAVER

Repeat purchases of a brand that meets the needs for quality, size, and price. Look for this brand at sales. You can save 10 to 30 percent when garments are packaged and marked "3 for X price."

QUALITY

Garment cut on true grainline.

Flat seams that are closely and evenly stitched with overcast edges.

No loose threads hanging from any part of the garment.

Ends of elastic securely fastened with fabric covering the joined area.

Trimming of same quality and washing characteristics as the garment.

Thelma Balerl is an associate professor and extension clothing specialist.

Trade names listed in this publication are to provide information only and are supplied with the understanding that mention of a product does not imply endorsement and omission does not imply discrimination by the Agricultural Extension Service.

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